



DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EDD)

The Influence of Governance Structure on International School Leadership

Fisher, Geoff

Award date:
2011

Awarding institution:
University of Bath

[Link to publication](#)

Alternative formats

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact:
openaccess@bath.ac.uk

Copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Access is subject to the above licence, if given. If no licence is specified above, original content in this thesis is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) Licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Any third-party copyright material present remains the property of its respective owner(s) and is licensed under its existing terms.

Take down policy

If you consider content within Bath's Research Portal to be in breach of UK law, please contact: openaccess@bath.ac.uk with the details. Your claim will be investigated and, where appropriate, the item will be removed from public view as soon as possible.

The Influence of Governance Structure on International School Leadership

Arthur Geoffrey Fisher

A thesis, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education

**University of Bath
Department of Education
June 2011**

COPYRIGHT

Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with its author. A copy of this thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with the author and they must not copy it or use material from it except as permitted by law or with the consent of the author.

This thesis may be made available for consultation within the University Library and may be photocopied or lent to other libraries for the purposes of consultation

ABSTRACT

International education is an area of education that, over the last forty years, has grown in size and significance. International schools are one of many vehicles for the delivery of international education and are growing in number and variety. In addition, the value placed by society on an international education and those curricular programs that promote international education continue to develop. International schools are, therefore, becoming an important and growing area of education. In general terms the amount of research on such schools is limited when compared to national education systems and national schools.

The growth in the number of international schools has been accompanied by a growth in the variety of such schools and the diversity of foundations, governance models and missions that support them. This diversity and my experience in international school leadership, allied to my interest in school improvement and school effectiveness as it pertains to the field of international schools, led to an interest in how models of governance impact on international school leadership and – through the leadership – on school improvement and development.

This research enquiry is a case study, based on evidence produced through three different research methods; individual school studies, a questionnaire and expert interviews. The use of three methods of data gathering allowed for a complex area to be examined and the results to be triangulated. The results of the case study serve to illuminate the area and to suggest future avenues of research.

One area of particular interest that was identified through the study was the interaction within the leadership structures of the schools and the relationships between the head of school, governors and model of governance. It would appear from the results of the study that those models of governance that relied on high numbers of elected parents of students currently attending the school produced a much higher turnover of heads and chairs of boards than did others. The

interaction between head, chair of the school board and overall board members also appeared to affect the length of time people served in these posts. Following discussion of such issues, the implications of governance model and rate of turnover for the leadership, development and improvement of international schools are further examined and discussed.

The process of conducting this enquiry, while time consuming and demanding, has been of huge benefit to me both personally and professionally. I have enjoyed the challenge and particularly gained from the greater professional insight developed during the study.

Declaration of authenticity for doctoral theses

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, contains no material previously published or written in any medium by another person, except where appropriate reference has been made.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Introduction	p 6
Chapter 2	Literature Review	p 9
Chapter 3	Research Design	p 49
Chapter 4	Results	p 68
Chapter 5	Discussion	p 115
Chapter 6	Conclusion	p 131
References		
Appendices		

Thought

As subversive places schools require a quality of leadership which is a constant irritant, not allowing a slide into intellectual complacency, constantly reminding colleagues of education's sacred mission. If it were ever true that schools reflect society then to maintain such a view in the current climate would be a gross dereliction of that mission, and a disservice to children and young people growing up in the twenty-first century world we have created for them. To fail to offer an alternative to the banality of mass media, the conceits of the designer culture and a sex-obsessed popular culture would be to betray a subversive legacy of thought which stretches back to Socrates, and has reached us by way of Piaget, Dewey, Bruner, Vygotsky and other leading minds which worked tirelessly to keep to the fore the vision of learning as a constant process of subverting common sense, challenging received wisdom and "inert ideas"

Macbeath (2007, p245)

CHAPTER 1:INTRODUCTION

International schools are a relatively recent phenomenon in the world of education. The first schools that might be identified as international can be traced back to the late 1800s but these schools were rare. In a wide ranging study of international education Sylvester (2002) concluded:

“Recent historical research has uncovered a significant case to be made for the consideration of a ‘first’ international school which was established in the height of the Victorian age ... (1867-89)”

Sylvester (2002, p 101)

During the twentieth century a number of schools began that were intentionally promoting an international, or intercultural aspect to their education program. Then in the early sixties some of these schools working together produced the first international curriculum for schools; the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. The IB began, in the 1960s, as a provider of a curriculum and examinations for the last two years of secondary education, called the Diploma, and has subsequently added two additional programs, the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Primary Years Programme (PYP), (www.ibo.org) to cover the complete range of school aged education. Since then there has been a dramatic increase in the interest in international education with other providers of international curriculum; notably an international version of the English General Certificate of Education and an international version of the American Advanced Placement examinations. The last thirty to forty years has also seen a huge increase in the number of schools claiming to be international, and of national schools offering international curriculum, for example there are now over 2000 schools, world wide, offering at least one of the International Baccalaureate Organisation’s (IBO) curricula (2008 Conference Notes). The majority of these schools are relatively young, independent (fee charging) and with a large variety of governance structures.

It is difficult to determine exactly what an international school is, and it is not the purpose of this enquiry to attempt to define either international education or what makes an international school. This study is focused on schools that select themselves as international schools. Hayden points out:

“So what are international schools? Are they an enlightened set of institutions with a vision of global peace and an ideology based on promoting internationally-minded values among their students? Are they essentially private institutions whose main aspiration is a business-focused profit margin? Or are they rather organisations that have responded to the growing demands of a global socio-economic elite: members of what has been referred to as the ‘transnational capitalist class’ (Sklair, 2001:8) for whom the imperative to maintain a competitive edge in the labour market leads to a desire for their offspring to obtain globally recognised qualifications. (Lowe, 2000:24-5)? In truth there is no simple answer; because for each of these the answer is ‘yes – in some cases’.”
Hayden (2006, p 20)

As it is the intention to use international schools as the subject of this enquiry some selection is necessary. The prime sample of schools examined in this study will be those schools that have taken up membership of the Council of International Schools and therefore view membership of a body that represents international schools as being of value.

School effectiveness and school improvement is an important area of research which has grown in importance over the last half century. The area now informs policy at a national government level across the globe. This area of research has identified a number of issues that contribute to a school being effective and showing improvement. In particular the importance of leadership has been identified as an essential component of both the effective and the improving school. The research has highlighted the importance of the leadership of the head of the school but is now also suggesting that leadership, however it is distributed through the school, is a vital component of the effective development of schools.

Leadership is not limited to the head of the school but includes middle management, staff and the governors of schools.

My previous research interest in school effectiveness and school improvement research, coupled with my experience in international school leadership, led me to an interest in the application of this research in the international school arena. My sense is that school effectiveness and improvement research, while based on national schools, has relevance to international schools.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and illuminate the links between governance, in particular governance structures, school leadership and the impact of the interaction between the two on school development within the international school context. This study does not claim to be exhaustive or quantitative to the point of being able to draw consistent conclusions but rather begins an investigation and provides some insights into the area while identifying possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The range of research and information covering the areas of school improvement, school effectiveness, and leadership in the literature is considerable. Following a review of the literature, school governance, international school governance, school leadership and the links to school development became a focus for the enquiry. One particular interest was to see if the large body of research covering the areas of school improvement, school effectiveness and the role of leadership within national schools also applied to international schools, which are under-researched.

I therefore determined to focus my enquiry on international school governance models and the complex relationship between governance, educational leadership and school development in international schools.

International Schools; International Education

Although it is difficult to define international education or to identify what is an international school an understanding of these two concepts is important as a foundation for this enquiry. One suggestion is to say that international schools deliver international education, however international education has defied any attempt at clear definition and has become a concept which usually includes that form of education provided by international schools. Such a proposal is obviously lacking in any useful application. In this area Hill (2006) and others have proposed that an international education must contain a sense of developing intercultural understanding amongst its students and that this sets international education apart from national education, and international schools apart from national ones.

"I and others (Hill, 2000: 34–6; Walker, 2004: 47–9) have argued that intercultural understanding is a fundamental component of international

education. When reference is made in this article to international education, internationalizing the curriculum or introducing an international perspective into a national programme, the focus is on intercultural understanding.”

Hill (2006, p6)

Hill goes further to give some depth to his interpretation of intercultural understanding. He says:

“Intercultural understanding, as an element of international education at school level, goes beyond, but includes, utilitarian objectives and cognitive knowledge; it also embraces the affective domain of empathy and respect, and being sufficiently open-minded to acknowledge the ‘existence and necessity of a range of perspectives’.”

Hill (2006, p12)

While noting the issue of intercultural understanding and considering it an important aspect of international education and international schools, it is not in itself a sufficient foundation for the purpose of this study. Hayden, in a wide ranging examination of international schools, suggests that international education can take place in both national and international schools. She suggests that international education is the result of both curricular and other school-provided opportunities. Her comment, below, encapsulates this and provides a broader foundation on which to build the concept of an international school. She suggests that:

“international education as a concept is inclusive, with many interpretations within different contexts. Within schools, international education has a number of facets including, though not exclusively, the formal curriculum. International education may be experienced in national schools, where suitable opportunities are built in to facilitate this experience for students and also may be experienced (though not necessarily) within international schools.”

Hayden (2006, p7)

If these two suggestions are taken as the basis of a working concept of international education then the task of categorising international schools becomes an issue. Many authors have attempted this task and I do not propose to examine

this lengthy debate in detail. However it is worthwhile identifying a general description of the type of school that I propose basing this study on.

One place to start is those schools that describe themselves as international schools. Such a description can cover a number of ideas, as noted by Hayden:

“In essence, schools describe themselves as international schools for a variety of reasons, including the nature of the student population and or the curriculum offered marketing and competition with other schools in the area, and the school’s overall ethos or mission.”
Hayden (2006 p10)

In addition a number of authors have attempted to either categorise international schools or define them. These definitions have often been somewhat vague and inclusive, such as the following:

“International schools have a very culturally diverse student body, ideally with no one nationality significantly dominating the others. They are almost invariably private, independent institutions and they teach an international education programme.”
Hill (2006, p8)

“In practice, however, given the huge diversity of schools and the absence of any central authorizing body, it is arguably of little value to discuss prerequisites – or even, perhaps, to attempt a categorisation.” (Of international schools)
Hayden (2006, p16)

As a way through this impasse Hill (2006) has suggested a series of four categories on international schools, which have been summarised by Hayden as

*“- national school abroad and national programme of home country
- national school in home country and international programme
- international school and international programme
- international school and national programme of one or more countries”*
Hayden (2006, p17)

The schools that are described in the last two categories generally try to meet the pragmatic needs of managing a school mixed with an attempt to promote the philosophy of an international education, including the development amongst both staff and students a sense of *‘intercultural understanding’*. As Haywood (2002) put it:

“The visionary ideal of international education has a long and distinguished history but very few of the successful international schools that exist today can actually trace their origins to the promotion of ideals. ... the two typologies (visionary and pragmatic) need not be in contrast and to a large extent they coexist alongside one another. Indeed, they frequently coexist within the same institution.”

Haywood (2002 p171)

Where does this discussion on international education and schools leave us? The answer is not much further forward in terms of concrete definitions but with a foundation of understanding of what might constitute an international school. This would include any school which tries to promote ‘intercultural understanding’ through its curriculum, teaching, student body or its leadership and ethos.

For the purpose of this study on international schools and their governance/leadership I am going to draw on schools that are all members of the Council of International Schools. This umbrella organisation representing and providing services e.g. accreditation, has a membership of over 600 schools, with an additional larger associate membership. All member schools have chosen to join an organisation that caters exclusively to the needs of international schools. The membership is drawn from schools of all types, with huge variety in governance, history and make up, they are spread throughout the world and therefore provide a broad based sample.

In conclusion, as the number of international schools continues to grow so does the number of schools offering an international curriculum. As interest in international education grows so does the number of allied bodies who are

providing a range of services to this sphere of education. Schools, training organisations, networks, private/business interest as well universities are all starting to express an interest. The amount of research with a focus on international education/ schools has grown along with the industry as a whole. This growing body of knowledge is, however, small when compared to national systems. The issues that surround governance, leadership, management and development in international schools remain under-researched and are the focus for this enquiry.

School improvement and school effectiveness

School effectiveness research started with the work of Coleman et al (1966) and Rutter et al (1979), amongst others, in the late 1960's and 1970's. Their work consisted of large scale studies of students and the outcomes for students from different backgrounds and schools, linked to the level of student achievement. The studies showed that educational outcomes were predicted by socio-economic background and other family or societal factors, suggesting that schools made little difference to educational outcomes.

“Taking all these results together, one implication stands above all: that schools bring little to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context.”

Coleman (1966)

Additional research into the area, while still showing the importance of socio-economic background, also started to show that some schools produced better results than others for students from the same background. Such findings suggested that schools could, and did, make a difference to student outcomes. If this was true then it is clear that some schools are more effective than others, producing better student outcomes. This introduced the notion of an effective, or ineffective, school. Subsequently the concept of a school that was improving, i.e. becoming more effective on behalf of its students, was introduced.

“Where earlier studies of educational disadvantage held that what schools did was secondary to social environment, school effectiveness studies have endeavoured to show that the internal effects of school on student outcomes are large and are subject to a level of change that can result in significant improvements.”

Tesse and Polesel (2003, p185)

Although schools varied in their effectiveness with different groups e.g. gender, lower or higher socio-economic status, many studies in many different countries (Marzano, 2007) have produced a consistent set of findings showing that schools do indeed make a difference. There is still much debate, however, about how much of a difference schools make, with some researchers suggesting that the money spent on schools would be better spent on reducing socio economic inequality and other class dividers.

This research has also been supported by comparative education data that looks at studies on educational outcomes across countries. In particular there is some interesting work based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results. This programme was launched in response to a need to compare data across countries and educational systems and, once completed, showed considerable variation. In particular it showed that the impact of socio-economic status differed from one country to another. This suggests that different systems at a national level can be more or less effective in raising student outcomes:

“PISA reveals considerable variation in levels of performance between students, schools and countries. It shows that the socio-economic background of students and schools exerts an important influence on student performance, although this is much less marked in some countries than in others. More importantly, some of the countries which have been most successful in mitigating the effect of social disadvantage are among those with the highest levels of performance. PISA suggests that schools can make an important difference.”

OECD (2001 p4)

This conclusion was further supported in a study based on PISA outcomes by Leigh and Thompson that found that schools could and did have the potential to make a significant difference in student outcomes:

“In the 2006 PISA tests, socioeconomic status explains 11-12 per cent of the variation in student results, leaving 88-89 per cent to be explained by other factors. The explanatory power of socioeconomic status in PISA has declined over the period 2000-2006, with this drop being statistically significant for reading and mathematics.”

Leigh and Thompson (2004 p66)

This conclusion was also supported by a Canadian study done by Willms who examined the difference between PISA outcomes for the same socioeconomic status (SES) strata in the US and Canada. He concluded that there was a significant difference between students from the two countries who came from the same SES background. His conclusion was that there were a variety of factors which could influence student outcomes and that one of these was the school the students attended:

“The reading performance of youth from high socioeconomic backgrounds does not differ substantially between Canada and the US; however, youth from low socioeconomic status backgrounds fare markedly better in Canada than the US. Thus, Canada’s advantage in reading performance is mainly attributable to its success for students from low SES backgrounds. ... The school-level factors examined in this study explain about 20% of the contextual effect in both countries.”

Willms (2004 p27-8)

These studies have shown that there are more effective or less effective schools. The research has also identified features that can be associated with effective schools. These include leadership, a shared sense of commitment and mission, good discipline and high academic expectations amongst others. Tesse and Polesel summarised some of these factors in 2003, as follows:

“These reveal much about what effective schools do and do not do. Strong leadership, positive academic expectations and requirements, high levels of pupil and parental involvement, structured programs, low levels of coercion,

orderly environment, shared sense of mission among staff, high teacher-pupil ratios and small school size all appear on the list of factors associated with effective schooling.”

Tesse and Polesel (2003, p186)

The basis of school effectiveness research is to identify the differences between effective and less effective schools, and reproduce the features of the effective schools. For if these features could be replicated then all schools, and student outcomes, would improve.

“The effective schools movement is framed by three central assumptions: 1) schools can be identified that are unusually effective in teaching poor and minority children basic skills as measured by standardized tests; (2) these successful schools exhibit characteristics that are correlated with their success and that lie well within the domain of educators to manipulate; (3) the characteristics of successful schools provide a basis for improving schools not deemed to be successful.”

Bikel (1983, p 3)

This area of research has resulted in three broad outcomes; firstly there is now a large body of research surrounding school effectiveness; secondly an allied area of research, school improvement, has grown and developed; thirdly both areas of research have had an increasing influence on education, particularly educational policy at the national level, and schools.

School effectiveness research initially focused on student outcomes and in particular on academic outcomes. The fundamental measure of whether a school was affecting student outcomes was usually based on the results of examinations, often competitive general examinations like the UK GCSE system. As the research continued a finer focus was produced that identified factors that were important in effective or improving schools. These included effective teaching, effective departments and effective leadership.

School improvement, as an area of research, supported the identification of features of an individual school that can be seen to be developing or improving. It

is an area of research which is based on the individual school or group of schools and is less exclusively focused on academic outcomes as a measure of success. One example of this is the work of Nye et al who looked at the impact of effective teaching and teachers as a measure of an improving school. Such work shows that the individual teacher can, and does, have an impact on student outcomes.

“These findings would suggest that the difference in achievement gains between having a ...50th percentile teacher (an average teacher) and a 90th percentile teacher (a very effective teacher) is about one-third of a standard deviation in reading and somewhat smaller than half a standard deviation in mathematics.”

Nye et al (2004, p 253)

The result of much of this work can be summarised to show that improving schools evaluate and consider many aspects of their work, including resilience, teaching culture, the capacity of the school at all levels to implement change, and encouragement of learning communities to mention a few. Cavanagh and Waugh concluded that:

“Research findings (of school effectiveness research) were applied in the design of school improvement programs which typically were intended to change learning conditions and other related internal conditions to enable more effective accomplishment of educational goals. The results of school effectiveness research suggest that sustainable school improvement requires changing school and classroom culture, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours concerning the learning of students.”

Cavanagh and Waugh (2004, p 245)

The last thirty years has seen a change and shift in the focus of school improvement research. This can be divided into three broad phases. The first was typified by initiatives that included school self evaluation and other more individual projects undertaken either by single teachers or schools. The second resulted from an alliance between school improvement and school effectiveness researchers. The major impact of this phase was not the outcome of research but the fact that many governments, particularly in the developed world, picked up on the findings of this research and used it as a basis for policy. This movement was termed ‘neo

liberal' and policy reform included greater accountability and parental choice, school inspections, league tables, national curricula and age related standardised testing. Interestingly as many international schools are based on developed world curricula models, in particular American and British but also Canadian and Australian, the changes in educational policy in these countries also affected the international school arena in particular in the areas of testing and curricula structure. Towards the end of the 1990's it began to become clear that many of these policy initiatives had had little effect on student outcomes. As Hopkins and Reynolds conclude following a review of the literature:

"two striking conclusions are reached:

- the first is that on the available evidence there was no increase in student achievement in any case except Chicago, and even that was 'slow in coming' (Leithwood et al., 1999; p. 40);*
- the second is the 'disappointing contribution that performance-based reforms have made to improving the core technology of schools' (Leithwood et al., 1999; pp. 61–63). In particular, these reforms did not adequately acknowledge the importance of local context, did not take support of the school site seriously, did not find incentives that worked, did not contribute to any significant increase in professional capacity and did not address and diagnose any opportunity costs."*

Hopkins and Reynolds (2001, p461)

These findings led into the third phase of research in school improvement which was more pragmatic, accounted for the individual school context and focused on capacity building within the classroom. This phase of school improvement has appealed to the international school with its focus on the individual school and teacher.

The school improvement literature is now a rich resource of study on the various issues relating to the improvement of schools. There have been a number of reviews that have tried to summarise these findings. One example based on a review of the history of school improvement research by Hopkins produced a list of features which shows how a school might allow for improvement. Hopkins argues -

“that school improvement efforts cannot be sustained unless appropriate organizational conditions are established within the school. ...

- a commitment to staff development;*
- high levels of involvement of staff, students, parents, and community in staff decisions;*
- transformational leadership approaches;*
- effective coordination and communication strategies;*
- serious attention to enquiry and reflection around teaching and learning; and,*
- a commitment to collaborative planning.*

As outlined in Renihan (2003, p 197)

There is still much that is contentious about the field of school improvement and school effectiveness. It has been observed by a number of authors that the last three decades of research and policy changes have not made sufficient impact on pupil achievement. There remain divisions within the researchers as to the quality of information that is used to make policy changes and initiatives.

However, what is clear is that there is a general agreement as to what makes a school effective and how that can be translated into the progress or improvement of schools as individual entities. One feature that is common to all this work is the positive impact of effective leadership. The initial work in this area focused on the quality of leadership from the head of the school; more recently the issue of distributed leadership has become an area of emphasis. Other features of an improving or developing school might include the leadership of the governors and staff. In addition it could be suggested that curriculum development, professional development of staff, investment in infrastructure, a growing or stable student population and student outcomes in external examinations and the universities they access, could all be associated with a developing school.

A summary of school improvement research suggests that there are common features to improving schools. Typically reviews and authors, for example Rowan et al (1983) and Bickel (1983), would include features such as:

- A school climate conducive to learning i.e. one that is free from disciplinary problems and that includes high expectations for student achievement;
- A school wide emphasis on basic skills;
- A system of clear objectives for monitoring and assessing students' performances;
- A school principal who is a strong leader and who sets high standards, frequently observes classrooms, and creates incentives for learning.

There was a general and growing conviction that schools could, and indeed did, make a difference to student outcomes. It was also felt that features of improving schools could be identified, quantified and reproduced from school to school.

It should be noted that all of this research has been focused on national schools, for good reason, as most of the funding came from government sources and had national policy implications. It would seem to me, however, that many of the findings of this research should apply equally to international schools.

One outcome of the development of school improvement research has been that of the implementation, often by policy, of a greater degree of accountability for schools. One form that this has taken has been the introduction of systems of reviewing schools. In England this took the form of school inspections, in Australia of external school audits and in the US of an accreditation system. All of these systems varied but have in common a review of the school by an external group often using a school self-study as a basis for the review. The self-study is normally conducted against a set of standards or markers of best practice, and then forms the basis of the external team's review of the school. Accreditation and review differ from inspection in that they try to take into account the school's individual objectives or mission as opposed to being a rigid comparison against all standards.

In international schools there has been a growing awareness of the school improvement literature and efforts made by national systems, in particular the British and American developments, as the majority of international schools draw

from the national systems of these two countries and the majority of international school teachers are, if not British or American, then certainly drawn from these and other Western countries. One practical expression of this awareness has been the growth of various forms of accreditation. These have generally grown from a US or UK base and have been promoted particularly by the European Council for International Schools (ECIS) and its offshoot the Council for International Schools (CIS). I was the organiser of a conference, in Latin America, early in 1998 which compared three systems:

1. Australian audit
2. ECIS/CIS accreditation, which is based on the US system of accrediting schools and
3. Ofsted inspections and the UK independent schools' inspection.

The outcome of this conference was that a group of Heads of Latin American bilingual schools decided that the systems offered did not suit bilingual schools and developed their own system: the Latin American Heads Conference review.

Most international schools are independent of government support and have no direct need to undergo any form of review but, as Fertig suggests, the twin push of market differentiation and a desire to improve the school have meant that many international schools routinely submit themselves to accreditation or inspection:

"international schools have not been able to shield themselves from the desire to attain the kite mark of accreditation. This desire is often a voluntary one, resulting from a desire to imbue a sense of 'school improvement' into the school."

Fertig (2007 p335)

In summary, the fields of school effectiveness and school improvement research have identified a number of ways that schools can make a difference to student outcomes. This has led to a sense of how schools can change to improve and to better support the students in their care. One area identified as being of high importance in this effort is school leadership at all levels. This then becomes one focus for further research within this enquiry.

Leadership

The association of leadership with school effectiveness and school improvement is a theme which runs through most of this area of literature. The link between leadership and improvement has become strong enough to be assumed. In an article examining the links between leadership and secondary school improvement Foster (2005) draws on her work and that of many other authors to show the strength of this association:

"Researchers Katzenmeyer and Moller (2002) argued that the potential for school improvement is enhanced through teacher leadership and liken the development of teacher leadership to the 'awakening of the sleeping giant' . Similarly, findings from their five-year investigation of school leadership in successful schools prompted scholars Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann (2002) to theorize that 'parallel leadership' was required to implement and sustain school improvement. They define parallel leadership as 'a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity'. "
Foster (2005, p49)

The sense of importance given to leadership within the school improvement arena was also argued by Harris et al who had the following to say:

"Research findings from different countries have revealed the powerful impact of leadership on processes related to school effectiveness and improvement. (e.g. Van Velzen et al., 1985; Ainscow et al., 1994; Stoll & Fink, 1996; Harris, 1999). Essentially, schools that are effective and have the capacity to improve are led by headteachers who make a significant and measurable contribution to the effectiveness of their staff. Whatever else is disputed about this complex area of activity, the centrality of leadership in the achievement of school effectiveness and school improvement remains undisputed."
Harris, Day and Hadfield (2003)

There is much of interest in the debate about which aspects of leadership are the most effective, of how these aspects might be spread through the systems studied and how effective different aspects of leadership can be made more effective.

These studies range from international comparative studies to small scale single school investigations. One general conclusion is that leadership is a vital aspect of school improvement and in particular the leadership provided by the Head of the school.

If leadership is vital to school improvement then is there an impact of turnover on the impact of the leadership on the school. This impact is an area of research under-represented in the traditional literature but well established as an area of concern particularly in the independent school sector. This has relevance for the international school sector as a large percentage of these schools are independent of national government control. In an interesting series of articles Littleford suggests that longevity of the Head is a crucial area when it comes to school development in independent schools:

“The Head’s impact on the school only begins to occur after years 8-10 when parents, past parents, board members and alumni begin to feel a debt to the current head for the success of their children and the fund raising potential begins to pay off. The years of substantive contribution are often 8-15 and more.

Littleford (2005, p 4)

Littleford also suggests that the issues of longevity and its links to school development can be seen at the level of trustee (governor) and board Chair.

“The more stable and strong schools, with the longer serving heads, have trustees who serve for longer periods and chairs who serve at least 3 years and often 5 or more. Yet the typical independent school board chair today serves only a two-year term. ...

Frequent turnover of trustees, and thus shorter terms for board chairs leads to shorter terms for school heads. This turnover of heads leads to a power vacuum into which the faculty naturally moves. Every turnover of head creates insecurity for teachers, except where it happens so often that they have become cynical about it.

Littleford (2005, p 5)

The issues of leadership turnover at all levels within a school, including trustees, head, teachers and chair of trustees seems to have an impact on the school's development and improvement. This would also appear to be true in both national system schools and independent schools. This would also seem to hold true in international schools, and those aiming to deliver on Hill's suggestion of inter-cultural awareness or international mindedness. As Haywood suggests, the leadership of international schools have a responsibility to not only lead a school and to improve it but also to inculcate a sense of international vision to the school community:

"Most of all, perhaps, there is at least one piece of strong empirical evidence that would lead us to ascribe a key role to management in the development of international education, and it is confirmed directly by research from many national systems. It is a well established research finding that leadership through heads, superintendents or principals is the single most important contributing factor in creating a school's ethos, identity and ultimately its success or failure as an institution. We must therefore seek to identify how successful managers have been able to influence their schools and generate an international ethos in the educational project. We might also learn from some of the successful developments in international education what features are required for effective implementation of an international vision."

Haywood (2002 p175)

It seems, therefore, that an examination of aspects of international school governance structure and the relationship to turnover of leadership, longevity of head and faculty and other features of school development / improvement might allow for a comparison between national schools and international schools and an identification of any differences that might exist. As Haywood concludes:

"the essential management function in international education is to keep the ultimate vision and values in focus and to steer the school towards these long-term aspirations through the involvement of the community in general (and especially the teachers) in the educational project. The visionary role of the leader complements the technical features of pragmatic management and ensures that the school is not only managed well and successfully but that it has an ethos that can genuinely allow it to aspire to be international in nature as well as in name."

Haywood (2002 p182)

Leadership role of the head

There is a wealth of research evidence which supports the idea that heads of school are important, some would argue essential, to the improvement and development of schools. At the same time there is much discussion about what form that leadership should or could take to be most effective. The understanding of how this leadership is applied e.g. distributed leadership and the encouragement for all staff of a school to be leaders, forms part of this discussion. However there do not appear to be any studies that directly link the longevity of head and the consistency of trustee service to school improvement. A number of authors suggest the importance of leadership and a schools approach to leadership as being crucial to school improvement. Harris, a leading researcher in the area of school leadership and the value of distributed leadership, suggests that:

“Researchers within the school effectiveness and school improvement fields have consistently reinforced the importance of leadership as a major lever for change, development and improvement. ... A greater emphasis upon the need to raise standards and to improve the outcomes of schooling has increased the pressure upon heads to secure, sustain and demonstrate school improvement. This has inevitably extended the roles and responsibilities and demands upon head teachers and those serving in other key leadership positions within the school.”

Harris (2004b, p3)

This notion is reinforced by many other authors to the point where, in this area of research, the value of the head of the school and the overall leadership within the organisation is seen as essential. This would seem to be particularly true in generating an ethos of learning and in strategic leadership.

“Educational leadership has been seen by many as one of the most important factors in school improvement and effectiveness and is about providing a culture within which teaching and learning will prosper. The training of leaders has therefore become of paramount importance.”

Stroud (2006, p 89)

However, although widely accepted and supported by research it is not clear how leadership has an impact on student outcomes. The mechanism by which leadership can promote student achievement needs to be examined if leadership is to become something that can be generated in a thoughtful and focused way. Mascall et al articulated this position and suggested a line of investigation when they said that:

“Much current leadership research aims to demonstrate the impact of leaders on schools and students. But the direct effects of leadership on student achievement, the most defensible of the possible outcomes of interest, are weak. So the challenge is to identify the indirect path through which leadership influences students; this is a challenge to identify variables that leaders influence and which also influence students. ...

The degree to which leadership is successful in improving the learning of students would appear to reflect, in part, the amount of influence leadership has on teachers’ motivations and related beliefs and feeling.”

Mascall et al (2008, p214)

Hoy et al investigated schools that did affect student outcomes and suggested that they do so through a three faceted approach of academic emphasis, collective efficacy and faculty trust in parents and students. The authors outline their case as showing that these three facets have all been shown to have a significant effect on student outcomes:

“The results of our measurement model support our theory that the properties of academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and faculty trust in students and parents work together in a unifying fashion to form a general latent construct that can be labeled academic optimism.”

Hoy et al (2006, p 439)

“academic optimism is a school characteristic that predicts student achievement even controlling for socioeconomic status.”

Smith and Hoy (2007, p 556)

Although these outcomes have all been shown in national schools, the case would appear to be translatable to the international school arena. For all of the factors mentioned are school-specific rather than system-specific and therefore an international school, although somewhat isolated from a system perspective, would be able to engender this sense of '*academic optimism*'. Hoy and colleagues suggest that collective efficacy is mediated through the teacher and the classroom. They bring together the sense of teachers' perceptions of their own capabilities, the supervision of teachers, the efficacy of the school and organisational culture. If academic optimism provides a method or route for the role of the head and board to affect the student outcomes, then any link between academic optimism and distributed leadership could also be significant. There is a growing body of research which suggests that distributed leadership within schools is of benefit to schools and students, although a causal link between student outcomes and distributed leadership is yet to be clearly supported. As Harris suggests:

"We do not know, for example, exactly what forms of leadership result in school improvement, across different school contexts, and in different types of schools. We do not know what particular combination of experience, training and professional development most benefits leaders wishing to improve their school."

Harris (2004b, p4)

However, there does appear to be a link between academic optimism, distributed leadership and trust in leadership:

"Higher levels of teachers' academic optimism were positively and significantly associated with planfully aligned forms of leadership distribution. Among the components of academic optimism, this positive and significant relationship appeared strongest with respect to trust in leaders."

Mascall et al (2008, p224)

Distributed leadership is based on allowing leadership to be expressed by both formal and informal leaders within the school community. The provision of opportunities and development of capacity as well as supporting those who take up

leadership in any capacity are seen as important to the development of a distributed leadership model. It is suggested that such a model provides for better, more flexible, more responsive leadership and that this will have an outcome on the school culture and the student outcomes. As Harris puts it:

“The key message here is that leadership capability and capacity is not fixed but can be extended.... The responsibility of those in formal leadership roles in schools is to ensure that informal leaders have the opportunity to lead at appropriate times and are given the necessary support to make changes or to innovate.”

Harris (2008, p174)

There would appear to be methods by which the principal's effectiveness can be channelled through school culture and teachers' work allied to a broad set of leadership opportunities to provide the optimum conditions for student participation and, in turn, student learning. In fact as Silins and Mulford point out, if the sense of distributed leadership also includes the students then there is an impact on students' capacity to learn:

“Our model indicates that organisational learning significantly enhances teachers' work in the classroom. Organisational learning is a significant mediator of the principal's leadership and resource effects on teachers' work and through teachers' work on student participation in and engagement with school. Our results also show that high schools with higher levels of teacher learning and leadership achieve higher levels of organisational learning. Teacher learning is a system factor and enhances organisational learning which, in turn, contributes to enhancing student learning. Finally, our results indicate that students are increasing their capacity for learning when they voice their opinions in class, participate in decision making and goal setting and participate in extra-curricular activities.”

Silins and Mulford (2002, p 443)

A summary of this point is made by Smith and Hoy and by Robinson. Both of these authors suggest strongly that if academic optimism is generated, allied and supported by a trustful leadership who also distribute leadership throughout the school then the school is on the path to improvement and sustained development.

Robinson also makes the point that such a pattern within a school would sustain it through the loss of key personnel:

“Optimism is a powerful motivator because it focuses on potential with its strength and resilience rather than pathology with its attendant weakness and helplessness. Academic optimism attempts to explain and nurture what is best in schools to facilitate student learning. The course for school leaders and teachers is clear: tap the potential of positive thought and optimism and avoid the defeatism of disappointment and disillusionment.”

Smith and Hoy (2007, p 567)

“A second and related argument is to do with the sustainability of efforts to improve teaching and learning. Schools with stronger distributed leadership will, it is argued, have more staff who are knowledgeable about and take responsibility for the improvement of educational outcomes. Such distribution of knowledge, responsibilities and formal and informal instructional leadership roles, protects a school improvement effort against the consequences of a loss of key personnel. Such losses, together with a failure to develop a broad base of strong instructional leadership, have been identified as key reasons for the stalling of improvement efforts”

Robinson (2008, p 242)

To summarise, it is clear from the literature that leadership is a vital component of any effective or improving school. This leadership is dependent on the overall leadership of the head of the school and would appear to be most effective if mediated through a wide distribution within the school and supported by a trusting and optimistic ethos, in part created by the leadership of the school.

School Governance and International Schools

It would appear that an understanding of the role a head can play in leading the improvement or development of a school can be established and argued for. The same is true for the role of governance. There is much research in this area within national systems and independent schools which suggests that good governance is also a key part of good leadership within the effective and improving school. In fact good governance is seen as essential to the running of effective schools.

Land outlines some studies which suggest a direct link between board governance and school/student outcomes:

“in a study of 10 districts in five states found that districts with quality governance tended to have greater student achievement as measured by dropout rates, the percentage of students entering college, and aptitude test scores”

Land 2002 (p249)

There would appear to be a significant link between the quality of the leadership through governance and the quality of the school. However, such how such a link works is less clearly established. As Land (2002) suggests, in a wide ranging review, there are some studies which support the link but not enough to be conclusive or to link them to student outcomes:

“School board experts have identified an assortment of characteristics that they consider critical for effective school board governance. ...However, solid research linking these characteristics to more effective governance and, more specifically, positive academic outcomes is notably absent in the literature.”

Land 2002 (p264)

The impact of boards on schools would seem to hold true for national school systems and national independent schools. In these areas there are increasing expectations of governing bodies as the policy structure surrounding them change. Coping with these changes and providing direction are seen as vital. As McCormick et al suggest:

“some writers have identified a growing interest in governing boards, generally, and argued there is evidence that effective governance contributes to strategic direction and organizational performance.”

McCormick et al (2006, p 429)

The same authors also acknowledge that this is an area where more research is needed before clear links can be made, although they suggest that the relationship between board and head is important to the school:

“Currently, the research on school governing boards is severely limited by the paucity of empirical investigations. An important limitation is the failure “to treat school boards as discrete units ... Indeed, school boards are often analyzed and discussed only in terms of relationships with the school heads, without boards being considered in their own right.”

McCormick et al (2006, p 438)

The importance of this area as a focus for future research is not to be underestimated, for the board is responsible for the school even though these responsibilities vary given the conditions and the individual school. The role of governance within schools would seem to be growing and becoming more important to the development of schools.

The most important role of governance is identified as setting the mission and then monitoring the progress towards fulfilling that mission, as noted by Earley:

“To be able to monitor effectively, the governing body must know and understand what the school is trying to achieve. Governing bodies are seen as responsible for monitoring school development plans (SDP) and action plans, financial performance, policy implementation, the standards of achievement of the pupils, as well as their own performance.”

Earley (2000, p 200)

Although monitoring mission and performance may be the core of a governance role, the issue of leadership is of growing importance and taking on a greater leadership role is increasingly expected of governing bodies. This leadership has also been associated with the improving school as can be seen in the work of both McCormick et al and Earley:

“It is generally accepted that governance involves responsibility and accountability for the overall operation of an organization (Bohen, 1995). According to Wood (1996) it involves decisions and actions linked to defining an organization’s mission, establishing its policies and control mechanisms, allocating power, determining decision-making processes and establishing organizational culture and structures that facilitate accomplishment of the organization’s goals. In independent schools, as in other non-profit organizations, a School Board usually undertakes this role in concert with the

Head. The Head and other senior executive staff of the school are usually responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the School Board's policies. However, increasingly some school boards appear to have become involved in operational management through sub-committees (Bush and Gamage, 2001), suggesting that it may be more realistic to describe school governance as a shared organizational process of leadership and policy-making."

McCormick et al (2006, p 430)

The focus has also been on school improvement and how governors can help schools to raise standards (DfEE, 1998). Recent research has given emphasis to the governors' role in school improvement and examined the value and benefits an effective governing body can bring to a school."

Earley (2003 p355)

There is, as outlined above, a growing responsibility placed on governing bodies. This has raised the issues surrounding the effectiveness of boards and the results of their actions. Selection of members, effectiveness of contribution and value to the organization also become pertinent. In addition, how to make board members more effective has become an issue which then suggests training, evaluation of boards, measurement of effectiveness and accountability as needs to be addressed.

Cornforth's findings, in corporate governance, suggest that there are a number of factors that must be in place if a board is to function effectively and for the benefit of the organisation they serve:

"Using stepwise logistic regression the research suggests that board inputs and three process variables are important in explaining board effectiveness, namely: board members have the time, skills and experience to do the job; clear board roles and responsibilities; the board and management share a common vision of how to achieve their goals; and the board and management periodically review how they work together."

Cornforth (2001, p217)

McCormick et al amongst many authors have produced more specific characteristics of effective school boards based on their work in the US. Their work is mirrored by others including Land (2002):

“In the United States, a number of researchers (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger et al., 1992; Goodman et al., 1997; Speer, 1998) have identified several characteristics of effective school governance. These characteristics have included focusing on student achievement and policy, effective management, development of conditions and structures that allow the Head to manage, agreement on processes to evaluate the Head, communication, trust and collaborative relationships with the Head and between board members, communication with outside groups and government, effective performance in policy making and financial management, evaluation and training, regular board meetings and long term service of board members and Heads.”

McCormick et al (2006, p 431)

What is clear is that governance is being identified as one area of education that must function well if the school, and its students, are to sustain improvement and development.

If we take an independent school with its myriad of interested groups, be they students, parents, the local community, the nation they exist in, the governors, staff and administrative groups, and acknowledge that education is a complex undertaking as it is based on assisting an individual through a series of developmental stages while being involved in a high risk–high reward undertaking, then it is no wonder that the system is complex with a high degree of emotional investment and an equally high sense of expectation. In such a complex system with such a wide set of expectations it is no wonder that the capacity of the governors and their role becomes an issue.

Generally members of school boards are people from the local community who bring an interest but often no expertise to the group. They are often on the board as the result of an election, which brings with it a sense of politics and competition. In addition these are usually voluntary posts which carry responsibility but no reward, other than the sense of supporting the school. One author, Land, has produced a list of what poor governance consists of which highlights how important this area is:

“poor governance was characterized by micromanagement by the board, role confusion between the board and superintendent, poor communication by the superintendent to the board, interpersonal conflict and lack of trust and respect between the superintendent and the board, bickering among board members or between board members and the superintendent, and board members’ actions reflecting their personal interests, disregard for the agenda process and the chain of command, playing to the news media, and limited commitment to improving governance.”

Land (2002, p250)

This description shows how difficult a task schools, administrators and governing bodies undertake. It is no wonder that it goes wrong occasionally!

There are two areas identified as being of particular importance in governance. These are the group functioning of the board and trustees and the relationship between the board and the head /management of the school. The volunteer nature of board membership and what is often a too brief an induction leaves board members ill-equipped to understand how to function as part of a group and as participants with a particular, attached but not directly involved, role to play. A sense of the ‘amateur’ comes through the literature where it is clear that many boards do not have a clear understanding of their role or the potential to either support or undermine the school they are committed to. Earley and Land point out that there is not only confusion amongst board members as to the specifics of their role but no agreement on how to manage the responsibilities. If policy making is one of the key responsibilities then it needs to be a focus of activities:

“asking about the governing body’s main leadership role, about one-fifth of chairs of governors pointed to the importance of providing support and encouragement; a further fifth to planning, decision-making processes and providing strategic direction; one in six mentioned the governing body’s monitoring role and one in ten noted its role as critical friend/sounding board or as a test bed for new ideas.”

Earley (2003 p359)

“Many school boards appear to have room for improvement in their policymaking. Approximately half of 216 board chairpersons in one questionnaire reported that more policy study and review sessions would

improve policy-making, and nearly a third of the respondents stated that their board did not hold periodic goal-setting and planning meetings”
Land (2002 p258)

The sense of query as to the role and effectiveness of boards in general and school boards in particular comes through much of the literature available. The question seems to be the capacity of the board to focus on the main task at hand; that of policy production, financial security and leadership of the school. In work based on UK national schools Earley concludes that:

“if governing bodies are to be retained ... they should focus their attentions, more than they currently do, on headteacher performance, school strategy and policy, with even greater management delegation being given to the headteacher.”
Earley (2003 p365)

and then suggests that there are ways for boards to become more focused and more effective, more professional in what they do:

“it is asked if the role is best fulfilled by the present pattern of untrained, volunteer, ‘lay’ school governors, or whether it is time to adopt a more professional approach. For governing bodies to become more effective—more ‘professional’ in the way they work—the role clearly needs to give greater emphasis to strategy and accountability. Training is needed, preferably but not exclusively school-based, which helps governing bodies to operate”
Earley (2003 p365)

If there is much that could be done to make the board more professional and focused on the tasks as allocated, then one area that it would appear could benefit from a greater focus and more training is the relationship between the head of the school and the board. This area has been identified as being important, possibly crucial, to the functioning and development of the school. For example Heystek and Land both suggest that the principal is a key person in the interaction between school board, the chair of the board and the school as a whole.

“The relationship between the principal and the governing body is important for the effective functioning of a school.”

Heystek (2006 p 473)

“Case study and questionnaire data indicate that negative board-superintendent working relationships are marked by an overload of information and work for the board, too much board involvement in administrative matters, lack of board independence from the superintendent, and haste on the part of the superintendent to resolve issues (Carol et al., 1986). In contrast, good relationships between school boards and superintendents are characterized by respect, trust, confidence, support, and open communication. “

Land (2002 p253)

If the relationship between board and head is accepted as an important factor in creating the environment of an improving school then the inclusion of parents of students currently attending the school would seem to be an additional factor in generating the appropriate environment. A number of authors suggest that there are additional tensions within the board, and the board's relationship with the head of the school, if the board members are also parents within the school community. This combination seems to raise tensions within the board and between the board and the head of the school. Both situations are likely to affect the working of the board, the head, their relationship and the outcomes for the school.

“research ... suggests that there is still not a good working relationship between principals and parental governors in school governing bodies.”

Heystek (2006 p 483)

“subdistrict elections (normally of parents) indeed result in more contentious and fractured school boards rather than more effective governance”

Land (2002 p239)

“Parent trustees are the most loyal, generous, committed and energetic of all trustees. At the same time, they are the dominant cause of unhealthy day school governance because they can be the most “hysterical” and impulsive board members when incidents arise that may affect directly their own child, the child of a friend or a favored disgruntled teacher.”

Littleford (2008a, p3)

“In my 40 years of working with boards, the least effective model was the totally elected untrained parent boards. Even with training, many parent boards have difficulty in separating the needs of their family from those of the school.”

Vinge (2005, p30)

What is clear is that there are increasing expectations of governing bodies and a growing understanding of the importance of effective governance but as yet insufficient understanding, or research, as to how to move a board from being ineffective to effective – although there is a strong sense that a united sense of purpose, good communication and training can all make a significant contribution to sustaining an effective board. However, as boards and schools are both dependent on people and their interaction this becomes a difficult thing to achieve, being dependent on individuals and their capacity to inter-relate. The need, therefore, for training, retreats, trusting relationships and the time to build all of these becomes crucial. This view is supported by the work of Land, McCormick et al and Ranson who show that governing boards and the interaction of board and board chair and head of school is a crucial one which needs work and time to develop:

“an amicable, productive working relationship might be necessary, but not sufficient, for effective educational governance that has a positive impact on students’ academic achievement. Additional research is needed to test this conclusion, as well as to identify which aspects of the board superintendent relationship are critical for improving or maintaining high academic achievement.”

Land (2002 p254)

“It is widely accepted that Board characteristics are largely determined by the characteristics of the individual board ... For example, a board member with expertise must be able to apply and share that expertise in board processes. Similarly, when the mission is unclear, goals are not shared, and strategies are inappropriate, information and expertise may not be enough to ensure board effectiveness (Coulson-Thomas, 1994).”

McCormick et al (2006, p 432)

“The significance of governance, it is argued, reaches deeply into the life stream of educational institutions. This radical analysis proposes that governance and learning are indissolubly mutually inter-connected.”

Ranson (2004, p11)

The literature, as discussed above, clearly suggests the importance of governance within national and international schools, for its influence not only on the head but also on the overall leadership of the school and on student outcomes. It would seem to follow that governance in international schools will be equally important and may well also rest, at least in part, on the relationship between the board, chair of the board and the head of the school. It is, therefore, an interesting idea that I will include in the research design.

International School Governance

This study identifies independent international schools as the focus of research. In particular my interest is focusing on international school governance and the link between governing bodies, heads of schools and the overall sense of direction, leadership and development of international schools. In this context it is interesting to note the limited research findings available on international school governance.

International school governance could be seen as having particular importance given the isolated nature of many international schools. These schools are spread widely across the globe, and are normally held apart from the national system of the country that they are situated in. This makes particular demands of head and board quite apart from the normal expectations of creating a vision, planning, financial management and other tasks as are normally expected of boards. In addition there is the expectation of providing a mission and vision of international education. As Wilkinson puts it:

“According to Brown (2000) the long-term and strategic planning for a school is the responsibility of the school board. ‘No other individual, group or organisation ... is charged with it’. Nor can anyone else do it as well as the Board. If this is so, it places enormous responsibility on the board. More than this, however, it assumes that the board understands clearly the longer-term or deeper issues involved in providing an international education. Strategic planning in such schools is not solely a matter of projecting numbers and

income in the light of possible future changes in the school's environment. If the school is to have a sense of continuity despite external changes, strategic or long-term planning must come to terms with its values and its guiding philosophy. It must understand the meaning it has given the school when it has given itself the name 'international'."
Wilkinson (2002, p186)

The number of schools claiming to be international or offering an international curriculum continues to grow quickly. Such a growth has been of schools with a variety of types of governance structures. Many of the boards are made up of volunteers, often parents of students from the school being governed. Many of the members of these boards come to the post with limited expertise in education and limited experience as a board member. In addition schools and heads of schools do not always understand the importance of induction and training for members of the board. On this foundation is then built a pragmatic approach to education usually with a focus on fees, infrastructure and the like. The issue of mission and philosophy is easily lost in the melee even if the school is expected to stand for international mindedness or intercultural sensitivity. As McDonald observes, good governance takes both the pragmatic and the philosophical into account:

"Amongst the different constituencies of teaching and learning communities, school governors hold a potentially influential place as architects of educational evolution. The key qualities for good governance are heart-driven as well as head-driven. International school boards have a duty and an opportunity to play a formative part in the evolution of innovative and responsive educational models."
McDonald (2002, p206)

As both Hill (2006) and Hayden (2006) have observed, most international schools are independent, i.e. fee paying and free of direct government influence. In addition, whether completely independent or part of a small system, virtually all international schools have some form of governing body. As has been seen above the stability of the board, the relationship between the board and head, the relationship between the board chair and head, the rate of turnover of board members and head are all important to the school's capacity to fulfil its mission, to

meet the needs of its students, to develop and to improve. The functioning of governing bodies, therefore, becomes crucial to the functioning of the school. In international schools, many of which are 'islands' of English language education within a very different cultural context, the importance of the governing body is amplified. The responsibilities that go with governance, the lack of opportunities for training, the impact of board politics on the school, and school politics can all add to the responsibilities. There is little research available with a focus on international school governance and its influence on leadership within the school. I feel that the area is becoming a focus arising out of the literature which I will also aim to address within the research design.

In the literature available, a number of models for international school governance structures have been identified. The CIS handbook (2005) suggest the following -

- Owned i.e. Proprietary
- Self-perpetuating
- Fully elected
- Fully appointed
- Combination or mixed i.e. some members elected and some appointed

These schools occur in the international sector in roughly the following proportions, although the study quoted did not include proprietary schools.

*" Self-perpetuating – 23 %
Fully elected – 23 %
Fully appointed – 13 %
Combination or mixed – 41%"*
Tangye (2005, p13)

What is not clear is which of these models provides the school with the best opportunities for development and growth. Is there a 'one size fits all' solution to governing international schools? If stability, a focus on the mission of the school, strategic and financial planning, and leadership are the main tasks of governance in international schools then does one model allow for greater focus on these tasks than others? Certainly the answer is not apparent in the literature. There is a

suggestion that self-perpetuating boards are slightly more stable than other international school models but there is very little material within the literature to suggest one model is better than any other. Tangye points out that -

There is, however, a material difference between the average tenure of a member on a self-perpetuating board at 7.5 years with that of a member of a combination board at 2.8 years."

Tangye (2005, p13)

The lack of more rigorous material would suggest that this is an area that would benefit from further examination.

International schools face the issues that are common in national school governing bodies. Hodgson made the following summary of her view of international school governance and the issues such schools face which would be familiar to most school boards. This view is supported by Littleford based on his work with national, independent schools:

"Sadly schools (international) frequently lurch from boards that micro manage, to those that purely rubber stamp senior administration recommendations. Proponents of change, frustrated by the sensitivity of the balance of power, frequently recommend new approaches, or variations on the current model. They argue that the world is rapidly changing and the challenges facing international schools, the size of their budgets and their responsibilities as employer, have outgrown the most frequently used governance model taken from 19th and 20th century philanthropy. When one reflects on the evolution of school administration in the last 100 years, the lack of similar change in approach to governance is remarkable. Most board members have too little time to become effective in their role and usually move on before they really understand the complexities of educational institutions. This lack of continuity means that there is little sense of history, and planning is often cautious and short term in its vision."

Hodgson (2005, p7)

"The vast majority of day and international school trustees are current parents. The by-laws of some schools actually prohibit anyone other than current parents from serving on the board. These schools have built a "time bomb" into their governance structures. Without proper and regular training, many of these trustees will lose sight of their mission-based role and instead may become embroiled in the politics of curriculum, personnel and change management."

Littleford (2008, p1)

Moreover international school boards must also cope with issues that are particular to international schools. Many international schools have boards dominated by current parents, often the outcome of election based selection. In such boards the opportunity for politics to interfere with the objectives of the school, and the higher rate of turnover that result from board membership being derived from highly mobile, expatriate communities can add to the burdens that the board faces. Hodgson makes the following points which highlight some of the differences between the governance of international and national schools:

“Usually, the founders were the first board members and their parent-dominated model, despite the inherent frequent turnover, is still the most common model. ...

When first recruited few board members realise the important balance demanded between being legally responsible for the school and yet not being part of its day-to-day management.” (p9) ...

The selection and success of these board members is a very inexact science and continues to be the number one reason for the resignation or heads of school and the ensuing after-effects. Frequently the election of board members is the result of a popularity/ visibility vote rather than an acknowledgment of the individual’s ability and experience.”

Hodgson (2005, p11)

McDonald (2002), in an interesting discussion on international school boards and how they renew themselves, examines the problems that can arise from an election based selection of board members:

“All too frequently specious assumptions are made that certain key professions must be represented, such as lawyer, banker, business leader or university academic. In recent years the frequently oligarchic nature of traditional board renewal has triggered an embarrassed swing towards highly democratic processes of board election. This is at its (not uncommon) extreme almost as absurd as selecting new teachers by vote. It has also resulted in a huge (and only partially desirable) rise in parental involvement in governance. It has fostered, too, an obsession with ‘equilibrium’ – of characteristics such as gender, race, age, creed, political leaning, educational background and wealth. The result is that a set of criteria is set in place, none of which guarantees the core qualities postulated above.”

McDonald (2002, p200)

In addition there is the issue of cultural misunderstandings taking place. International schools often have over 60 nationalities represented in their student body. The parent body is made up of people employed within the diplomatic, local and international business world. Within their work world there is an understanding of the rules that they play by. However, within the close set of relationships that a governing body will generate within the group the opportunity for greater cultural misunderstandings can easily occur. Hayden suggests:

“What ... makes the international school context different ... is the relative transience of some board members and the multicultural mix of the board members linked, perhaps, to varied previous experiences and expectations based on other cultural contexts.”

Hayden (2006, p130)

McDonald proposes an alternative set of qualities international school board members should have in order to govern effectively:

*“- The active and philanthropic will to govern (trustees should have) the interest, personal skills, will or humility to serve actively and positively
- A recognition that strategy, leadership and management, ... are far from synonymous – governance must distinguish itself from management
- Loyalty of purpose – the determination to fulfil the mission in actions, rather than in words or principles that evaporate when there is a call to action
- The will to learn – It is a wholesome rule of thumb that each governor should be ready to learn double what they are ready to teach to a board.”*

McDonald (2002, p198)

Few practising international school heads would argue with such a list.

Although there is material available within the international school literature on governance much, possibly most, of what is written is based on experience and anecdote not on a depth of research. The emerging focus of this enquiry, international school governance and leadership, while not having the opportunity of

great depth of study will be able to identify support or refutation of this somewhat less rigorous material. Wilkinson summarises the current position thus:

“... research evidence is accumulating that provides support to (international education’s) impact on the values of students who have experienced such an education. To be most effective and to sustain its effectiveness, however, an international school needs enlightened leadership, vision supported by an understanding of the pillars of belief and value on which this form of education rests.

Such a combination cannot be assumed of the many men and women who give freely of their time to provide leadership through the membership of the governing boards of international schools. Just as they provide support and direction, they in turn, require help to make their contribution an effective one.
Wilkinson (2002, p194)

It is straight forward to see similarities between national and independent school governance and that of international schools. However, the closer the examination of the literature the greater the apparent differences between the two. It is interesting to note the particular challenges facing international school boards that would serve to complicate the already intricate task facing school boards.

International School Heads

The role of the head of the school in any school is crucial to the health of the school and to its capacity to change, develop and improve. This has become clear within the literature review. This would also appear to be true in international schools. However there do also appear to be some particular aspects to leading an international school which would add additional nuances to the tasks that normally confront the school head.

Turnover of head and board members is an issue in school governance, as was seen in earlier sections of this review. If the head and or the board members turn over too quickly there is a loss of the sense of shared vision and the creation of a power vacuum that is filled by a number of people leading to politicking, greater

turnover of staff and other disruptions to the school. Littleford, a consultant in national, independent school governance, suggests that:

“Too frequent turnover of trustees and heads is causing serious problems in the structure of our boards and our schools. These problems damage their long-term financial and emotional health.... The head’s long term impact on the school only begins to occur after years 8-10 when parents, past parents, board members and alumni begin to feel a debt to the current head.” (p1)
“Frequent turnover of trustees, and thus shorter terms for board chairs leads to shorter terms for heads. This turnover of heads leads to a power vacuum which teachers naturally fill. Every turnover of head creates insecurity for teachers, except in those schools where it happens so often that teachers have become cynical about it. ... head turnover damages school culture.”
Littleford (2005, p3)

In international schools the rate of turnover of heads would seem from the little literature available to be greater than within national schools. It could be said that the role has become one associated with the ‘football manager’ syndrome where high turnover is something of a given. As Hayden points out, in a review of the relationship between Head and Board in international schools:

“a lack of any expectation of long-term security, job-wise, would seem to be one of the characteristics of the international school head.”
Hayden (2006, p105)

The issues raised that might lead to this greater turnover were identified by Hawley in the early 1980’s and included parent dominated boards, elections, lack of training and cultural misunderstanding. Hayden reviews his work and concludes:

“The reasons for such high turnover are complex but, while every case is unique, there are undoubtedly some common factors that appear with unwelcome frequency. ... Though relatively little research has been undertaken about high turnover of international school administrators, Hawley conducted a (1994) study which considered the employment history between 1980 and 1990 of heads of in 251 international schools In just one school year 1985-1986, almost a third of heads left their positions, and Hawley’s research concluded at that time that “the average length of time a school Head remains in the job was 2.8 years. In concluding some of the reasons for this relatively short duration ... Hawley suggests that:

- *In schools where members of the Board do not have children enrolled in the schools, school Heads tend, on average, to remain longer*
 - *Heads stay longer when school board policy exists in written form and when the head's performance is evaluated by the board*
 - *The more multinational the board the shorter the duration of the headship*
 - *The higher the turnover of board membership, the shorter the head's time in office*
 - *Those with previous teaching experience in international schools last longer than those without"*
- Hayden (2006, p106)

The lack of subsequent research and the fact that Hawley did not identify any causal link between his suggestions and the longevity of heads of international schools highlights the need for further investigation.

There are some papers in the literature that suggest a sense of tension between the board and head of the school. What is meant to be a professional relationship where one group takes the overview and advisory/ policy role and the other the management and leadership role can clearly move quickly to become a relationship of questions and distrust often built on personal rather than professional issues. Tangye has the following to say -

"Leave the management of the school to those entrusted with its task. This is the hardest task of all, and one which gives rise to the most angst amongst Heads. The task of the board is to provide strategic direction, guide and evaluate the head of the school and approve the budget."

Tangye (2005, p15)

In another paper Stout (2005), a previous head of international schools, makes some interesting observations on international school governance, from his own experience and those of others, when he suggests that:

"The chair, board member and head have unique and distinct roles and a major source of conflict arises when these roles become blurred. An excellent working relationship between the chair and the head is vital for a healthy school."

Schools are an extreme form of social organisation where the stakes for success and failure are high. By the very nature of the learning process and the learning environment, the capacity for misunderstandings between ... (all community members)... run high.

Conflicts can be precipitated in governance and management for a host of reasons but, upon analysis, the distal cause of the conflict begins with one person and usually follows a route which can be ... generalised."

Stout (2005 pp39-40)

Stout goes on to suggest that if things then become more tense the outcome is that someone leaves the school, normally the head. This sense of tension between the main leadership groups within the school can lead to a series of short term heads and to high turnover within the governing body.

Is there a way out of this impasse? Vinge has suggested that training, continuity and opportunities for reflection may provide a way to create a working atmosphere that will support the school and its student endeavours. He suggests that this will help create the sense of partnership that, if it can be generated, leads to effective working together.

"This need for training is particularly important in international schools where there tends to be a high turnover of both heads and board members.

However one of our goals must be to create conditions that promote more continuity of governing bodies and school administrators in each school, if optimal learning is to take place! We know that continuity is significantly enhanced when an effective partnership exists."

Vinge (2005, p31)

It can be seen that governance in general, governance models and the links between governance and the head/ administration of international schools is vital to the health, the development and the improvement of these schools. It can also be suggested that if these links become fractured or stressed then the school suffers. It is not clear what impact this has on the trustees, the administrators, staff or students of the school and it is within this area that I propose to base my enquiry. If there is an impact then it is also not clear as to how, by what mechanism, this impact is made.

This literature review has identified the area of international schools as being one of interest and has shown the importance of leadership arising from the school effectiveness and school improvement research. It has also highlighted that leadership at all levels including the school head, school board and a distributed model of leadership are aspects that need to be taken into account when looking at the effective or improving school. However, when similar material and findings are sought in the literature relating to international schools it quickly becomes clear that this is an under-researched and under-reported area. In particular the unusual setting and demands placed on international school leadership and the influence of different models of school governance have not been deeply studied. Nor has the impact of these demands, structures and the interplay between them on international school development been examined. It is therefore the area on which I propose to focus the enquiry and research to follow.

The literature suggest five models of international school governance - Owned i.e. Proprietary, Self-perpetuating, Elected, Appointed and Combination or mixed i.e. some members elected and some appointed, while also suggesting that some models provide a more stable leadership of the school. Such a suggestion would require more rigorous support to be taken seriously within international school improvement. I therefore determined to examine this area through my research.

CHAPTER 3:RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction and Research Questions

To examine an area in a manner that provides worthwhile information while at the same time fitting within the constraints of this enquiry is a challenge. The literature search highlighted a number of areas, including school governance, models of school governance, leadership and the influence of all three on school development within international schools as areas that appear to be worth investigating. Following the literature review I determined to examine these areas and the links between them. This area appealed as the literature covering this issue is rich but has not been examined in depth within international schools. Given that my own career has been largely based in administration of international schools and my area of study has been school improvement and school effectiveness this area of study appealed on a personal, professional and academic basis.

The specific question – In what ways does the model of governance affect the stability of school leadership within international schools? – provides the foundation of this research. The subsidiary question – In what ways does the model of governance and the stability of school leadership affect school development? – derives from the first.

Methodology

A number of possibilities were considered following the lead of Cohen et al that the research design had to be '*fit for purpose*' (2000, p73). Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were investigated. This examination led to the debate on the relative value of these two branches of research in the sociological arena. Although the debate on methodology is an interesting one, this enquiry is not the place to enter the detail of it. The advantages of a positivistic,

scientific, empirical approach were compared to the more individual, holistic phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach can be summarised as being based on the individual experience or as Lester puts it:

“Phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, ‘bracketing’ taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasise the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people’s motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom.”
Lester (1999, p 1)

This was compared to the positivist approach which could be described as a focus on what can be observed or measured, rejecting any other form of knowledge.

This position can be summarised as:

“a rejection of metaphysics. It is a position that holds that the goal of knowledge is simply to describe the phenomena that we experience. The purpose of science is simply to stick to what we can observe and measure. Knowledge of anything beyond that, a positivist would hold, is impossible.”
Web centre for social research methods (2009)

A brief review of the literature would suggest that this debate, between the positivistic and phenomenological positions, has moderated. Many sociological researchers work between the positivist and post positivist ends of the spectrum.

My own approach, in this study and philosophically, while drawing on positivism rests more closely on that of critical rationalism. This branch of philosophy, founded by Popper, suggests that we cannot achieve a clear view of ‘truth’ but we can move towards it. This movement is achieved by examining ideas and concepts and rejecting those that do not achieve our knowledge goal. Thus a new idea in education, e.g. that reduction in class size is a good thing, can be approached from either side of the debate and studies will lead us not to the optimum class size but closer to the most effective class size.

“Critical Rationalism takes the view that we don't have ultimate answers, but knowledge is nevertheless possible. Truth is an endless quest. The modern founder of critical rationalism was Karl Popper. Popper pointed out we can never justify anything, we merely criticize and weed out bad ideas and work with what's left”.

Dioguardi (2009, p1)

Or as Phillips and Burbules put it:

“Educational researchers constitute a community of inquirers. Doing the best they can and ever alert to improving their efforts, they seek enlightenment or understanding on issues and problems of great social significance. ... The aim is what the philosopher Karl Popper and others have called a regulative ideal for it is an aim that should govern or regulate our inquires – even though we all know that knowledge is elusive and that we might sometime end up wrongly accepting some doctrine or findings as true when it is not. The fact that we are fallible is no criticism of the validity of the ideal because even failing to find an answer... is itself an advance in knowledge. Questing for truth and knowledge about important matters may end in failure but to give up the quest is knowingly to settle for beliefs that will almost certainly be defective.”

Phillips and Burbules (2000, p 2-3)

However, whatever the philosophical underpinnings are it is clear from the literature that there is value in both qualitative and quantitative avenues of research. From a Popper perspective either can lead to a closer understanding of the ‘truth’.

A number of authors including Yin (1994, 2003), Stake (1995), Tellis (1997) and Cohen et al (2000) have all concluded that qualitative research can add effectively to research data in a constructive way. As Stake pointed out:

A distinction between what knowledge to shoot for fundamentally separates the quantitative and the qualitative enquiry. ...the distinction is not directly related to the difference between quantitative and qualitative data but a difference in searching for causes versus searching for happenings. Quantitative researchers have pressed for explanation and control: qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists.

Stake (1995, p 37)

These arguments were extended by Shaw (2003) who, in a far ranging discussion, reviewed the value of qualitative research within the areas of health, social work and education:

The 'sheer weight and diversity of the "quasi-inputs" which appear to intervene between effects and their presumed causes' means that 'the fine web of conditions within which social action occurs is discovered in the course of the research instead of having been provided for in the research design' (Abrams, p4).... It is not simply that experimental evaluation has technical limitations. Experimental and other comparable evaluation strategies inevitably disaggregate informal care, and rob it of its inherent systemic and holistic character. The problems stem from the intrinsic incapacity of such designs, rather than their technical imperfections.
Shaw (2003, p 61)

He suggests that there is much to support qualitative research as a methodology without concluding that it is a problem free. There are many issues identified in the literature that require care when constructing and implementing a research design. The issues that have to be addressed include being personally involved in the research, bias in interpretation and reliability, as well as the ability or inability to draw general conclusions. Shaw draws on the work of Reid and Sinclair to conclude that:

"Qualitative research draws attention to features of a situation that others may have missed but which once seen have major implications for practice. It counteracts a tendency to treat the powerless as creatures with something less than normal human feelings. It contributes to an ethically defensible selection of outcome measures. And, in combination with simple statistical description, it can lead to an informed and incisive evaluation of programmes in social services."
Shaw (2003)

Quantitative research is the basis of scientific research; it also holds much value in the social science domain. The process of hypothesis, control of variables, experiment, outcomes identified, correlations sought and predictions made leading to either a new hypothesis or to support of a prediction is well established. The results of quantitative investigations will, with other supporting results, over time,

become an accepted position, even a 'law'. The value of quantitative research is well understood as it is hypothesis driven, data rich and generally based on large scale studies that are able to be generalised. The criticism of this approach relates to *'the rejection of the belief that human behaviour is governed by general, universal laws and characterised by underlying regularities'* Cohen et al (2000, p19) who go on to point out that qualitative researchers agree that the world

"can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated;t their model of a person is an autonomous one, not the plastic version favoured by positivist researchers"
Cohen et al (2000, p19)

Therefore it would seem that both methodologies have value in social science research. As Torrance concludes, in a review of policy and its reliance on quantitative research, there is a place for qualitative research. He comments on the production of a report "Assessing Quality in Applied and Practice-Based Educational Research" saying:

"Its production is an acknowledgement that other sources of legitimacy and criteria of quality are important. Thus, the report articulates four dimensions of quality—epistemic, technological, use value for people, and use value for the economy—and argues strongly that a restricted, traditional view of scientific quality is no longer tenable."
Torrance (2008, p 522)

As a scientist I was initially attracted to a quantitative based method but the diffuse nature of the area I had identified as being of interest, allied to the complexity of gaining worthwhile results from such a diverse and far flung community as that of international schools as well as the lack of context which often accompanies large scale quantitative research in the educational arena, led me towards a qualitative approach. Following this and examining the various options available to investigate the research question, led to the suggestion of case study as a methodology on which to base this research.

Case study methodology allows for data to be collected by a variety of methods, both qualitative and quantitative, in order to give as detailed a picture as possible, albeit an individual one. It is interesting to note that much of the work done on school effectiveness has been quantitative while school improvement research had a greater influence from qualitative derived data.

The individuality and variety of international schools suggest that a broad quantitative study would not produce results that would be open to generalisation. While a case study approach, particularly supported by utilising a number of data gathering methods, would allow further avenues of research to be opened and for results to be generated that might be of value to the sector as a whole. As Tellis points out:

“Case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. Case studies have been used in varied investigations, particularly in sociological studies, but increasingly, in instruction. Yin, Stake, and others who have wide experience in this methodology have developed robust procedures. When these procedures are followed, the researcher will be following methods as well developed and tested as any in the scientific field. Whether the study is experimental or quasi-experimental, the data collection and analysis methods are known to hide some details. Case studies, on the other hand, are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data.”
Tellis (1997b, p 1)

Flyvberg (2006) critically examined case study as a research methodology and five of the criticisms made of case studies. He argued that ‘(a) theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge; (b) one cannot generalize from a single case, therefore, the single-case study cannot contribute to scientific development; (c) the case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; (d) the case study contains a bias toward verification; and (e) it is often difficult to summarize specific case studies’. He concluded that

“Today, when students and colleagues present me with the conventional

wisdom about case-study research—for instance, that one cannot generalize on the basis of a single case or that case studies are arbitrary and subjective—I know what to answer. By and large, the conventional wisdom is wrong or misleading. For the reasons given above, the case study is a necessary and sufficient method for certain important research tasks in the social sciences, and it is a method that holds up well when compared to other methods in the gamut of social science research methodology.”
Flyvberg (2006, p 241)

Case studies are used as a way of examining in depth the individual in order to illuminate the general. Case studies do have value as a research methodology that seeks greater general understanding through the examination of the specific case. As Cohen et al point out, the single instance can provide a route to understanding ideas more clearly than abstract theories. As they suggest ‘*case studies can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis.*’ (2000, p181), while it is clear that to rely too heavily on case studies would also limit any conclusions that may be drawn and that the lack of reproducibility and the opportunity for bias from the researcher are limits that must be acknowledged. However if based on a variety of sources of evidence, case studies can provide a robust method of examining the complex world of international schools, as argued by Stake and Yin:

“A case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case. ... Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.”
Stake (1995, p xi, p2-3)

“Case study research continues to be an essential form of social science inquiry. The method is appropriate when investigators either desire or are forced by circumstances (a) to define research topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) to cover contextual or complex multivariate conditions and not just isolated variables, and (c) to rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence.”
Yin (2003, p xi)

Given that the nature of the area identified as the basis for this research enquiry (i.e. governance structures and their relationship to school leadership and school

development) is individual to each school and each set of circumstances, a variety of methodologies suggested themselves. The methodology of case study appeared to me to be the most appropriate.

Methods

Having settled on 'case study' as the methodology to investigate the area identified within the literature review I felt that to follow Tellis's suggestion and utilise at least three *sources of data* within the case study framework would add valuable detail to the study. Three sources of evidence would allow for cross checking of results and triangulation of the outcomes, thus providing a greater sense of confidence in the outcomes. The use of different methods of collecting evidence allows for different pictures of the area to be examined, thus allowing for different perspectives on the same issue to be generated. This then allows for a more complex and, as Popper might say, a more critically realistic view to be obtained. Triangulation, i.e. comparing evidence acquired using different techniques, is well accepted as a research approach and is also associated with case studies.

"Case study is known as a triangulated research strategy. Snow and Anderson (cited in Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991) asserted that triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies. Stake (1995) stated that the protocols that are used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations are called triangulation. The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes. In case studies, this could be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 1984). The problem in case studies is to establish meaning rather than location."
Tellis (1997 b, p1)

"Triangulation is a way of assuring the validity of research results through the use of a variety of research methods and approaches. It is a means of overcoming the weaknesses and biases which can arise from the use of only one ... method. ...Triangulation also allows researchers to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources."
University of Bolton (2009)

In order to get as clear a picture as possible, three sources of data were utilised. These were studies of individual schools, a questionnaire and interviews with experts in the field of international education who also have a background in the management and governance of international schools. The value of triangulation is that it leads to greater validity for the conclusions that can be drawn from the data. Validity can be generally defined as a way of bringing different sources of evidence together to support, or invalidate a general theory or interpretation.

“a sound validity argument integrates various strands of evidence into a coherent account of the degree to which existing evidence and theory support the intended interpretation ...”
AERA, APA, & NCME (1999).

Kane, in a review of validity, suggests that validity is a powerful way to support educational research particularly if the area being held as valid is that of the interpretive argument rather than the evidence it is based on.

A major strength of this argument-based approach to validation is the guidance it provides in allocating research effort and in deciding on the kinds of validity evidence that are needed (Cronbach, 1988). The kinds of validity evidence that are most relevant are those that evaluate the main inferences and assumptions in the interpretive argument, particularly those that are most problematic.
Kane (2001)

Although time and space limit the extent to which I can explore this area validity is something that I am seeking in using three different data sources. If the data from those sources agree with a particular argument then that stands as good support for that argument and interpretation.

As with all research and particularly with research that relies to some extent on individual opinion it is essential to observe a proper ethical framework. Thus the British Educational Research Association (BERA) standards were taken as the

basis of all the research conducted. The association takes on the work of Gorman and suggests that any research should apply four principles to research:

“four principles which form the basis of bioethics apply equally to all types of research. These are autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.
BERA (2009)

BERA also suggest a framework of legal and ethical guidelines which should be adhered to when undertaking educational research. These guidelines include the following and were taken as the framework for this research.

“Researchers have the following responsibilities:

- *To develop proposals that are ethical and legal and seek approval from the Research Ethics Committee, where such a committee exists*
- *To conduct research to the agreed protocol (i.e. of the Research Ethics Committee) and in accordance with the legal requirements and guidance (e.g. codes of practice provided by the research discipline)*
- *To ensure the honest and respectful treatment of research participants, by informing them of the purpose of the study and by adhering to the guidance requirements (e.g. on consent and confidentiality), and at all times ensuring their safety and well-being vis-a-vis the research procedure, equipment and premises*
- *To ensure that the data collected is accurate, relevant and valid*
- *To ensure that the data is suitably stored and archived and that attention is paid to issues of confidentiality*
- *To manage resources efficiently, such as finances, time and intellectual property*
- *To report any project-related problems, failures, adverse incidents or suspected misconduct to the appropriate body*
- *To provide feedback of the results of the research to the participants, or at least the intended use of the results, including any intention to publish*
- *To provide accurate, truthful and complete reports, and disseminate the research outcomes through authorised and agreed channels, and ensuring that the work is available for critical review”*

BERA (2009)

This includes the reassurance of confidentiality and the opportunity to comment on the findings prior to publication.

School Studies

Taking on Stake's role of 'case researcher as interpreter' (1995, p97) and seeking to recognise an issue, study it and then find ways to make it more comprehensible to others, I have looked to use this enquiry as a way of examining the specific in an attempt to clarify the general. This approach fits within the remit of Yin's 'exploratory' case study (2003, p 5) seeking to be '*a prelude*' and a guide to a more in-depth study. Therefore, as Stake suggests, a study of the particular is an approach where we attempt to learn from the individual and aim to apply that learning to the general.

These schools were a convenience sample selected on the basis of the familiarity of the researcher and the capacity to access senior staff. However there is nothing to suggest that this sample will behave differently from a random sample drawn from the same population.

Four schools were examined within this section. All four are schools in which I have worked, as a senior administrator, although some a number of years ago. In all cases my personal knowledge has been added to by contact with other, more recent, senior administrative members of staff, three in each school. These staff were approached to determine their willingness to be part of the study and then interviewed, all by telephone. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on any changes to governance structure; the development of the school; heads and their role, turnover and reasons behind both; and then moved to personal details. The details of the interviews were recorded on the computer as written notes and then analysed on the basis of the topics of governance structure, school leadership, leadership turnover and the view of the interviewee on the impact of leadership change on school development. The changes outlined within the interviews were, where possible, ratified by requesting and receiving supporting evidence, normally documentary in nature.

These schools were chosen as they allowed me to use my own knowledge base for much of the ground work on governance structure and leadership within the school. In addition they contained variations of models of governance with one Elected, one Combination and two Self Perpetuating models represented. All the schools were 'international' in some form, offering one or more of the International Baccalaureate curricula. In addition the intimate knowledge that I had as a past administrator allowed for the generation of greater detail within the individual studies. The aim of this section of the enquiry was to take from the individual case and look to find commonalities which may inform the general. To be an observer within the area studied makes objectivity difficult. However by being placed within the context to be studied and reported on, the observer has the advantage of bringing a wealth of detail to the area being examined. This detail can allow for a greater sense of meaning to be brought out of the study:

"we emphasize placing an interpreter in the field to observe the workings of the case, one who records objectively what is happening but simultaneously examines its meaning and redirects observation to refine or substantiate those meanings"

Stake (1995, p8-9)

In each school I contacted three senior administrators who had either continued in service after I left the school or had joined latterly and were still in service. Senior administrators were chosen for interviews as they had an overview of the school and its recent history and development that included the role and input of the governing body. The overview was important as this was the focus of my enquiry. The people contacted were heads or, in a few cases, holders of other promoted posts within the schools. The interviews were semi-structured (see Appendix 2) with a focus on the school, its development and the changes that might have taken place. In all cases I covered the last twenty years of school development, which meant that my time at the school was included in the discussion.

The interviews aimed to establish background information about the schools' and their development and to establish if there were any links between the type of

governance structure, school leadership effectiveness and turnover and school development. The interviews covered the recent history of the school, moved on to what developments there had been in either curricular areas, strategic staffing changes or infrastructure additions. This then led to areas of governance, turnover of senior staff, recent news of the school and any links that the interviewee might make on the basis of their experience. This allowed for a review of the progress the schools had made and for me to examine my own history within the school in the light of recent changes.

The outcomes of the school studies were then used as a basis for the questionnaire and for the topics covered within the expert interviews. The questionnaire links to school development arose out of these inputs, personal experience and the literature review.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used as a method of collecting additional data that might link with the themes brought out by the study of the individual schools and in response to the research questions. By structuring the questionnaire to identify governance structure and relate these to leadership and development within the schools.

I felt that a questionnaire was appropriate as it allows for a cost effective and efficient way of contacting a wide sample. In addition the information gathered has already been standardised in the format of the questions. By utilising a questionnaire a world wide sample of international schools could be contacted spreading the base from which information is gathered. The questionnaire was designed after the evidence from the four schools had been gathered. Therefore the earlier experience informed the basis of the questionnaire and in due course the expert interviews. The questionnaire was developed taking into consideration the ethical issues that are raised through the literature and in accordance to the BERA standards.

“The questionnaire will always be an intrusion into the life of the respondent, be it in terms of time taken ..., the level of threat or sensitivity ..., or the possible invasion of privacy. ... Respondents cannot be coerced into completing a questionnaire.”

Cohen et al (2000, p245)

The issues raised through the literature that need to be addressed when constructing a questionnaire, if it is to be completed and returned, are usefully summarised in Cohen et al (2000, p246) and include informed consent, the right to withdraw, beneficence, and confidentiality. The construction of the questionnaire was built taking these issues into account and was based on the information gathered through the literature review and the school studies.

This method was chosen as it would, as Cohen et al point out (2000, p245), provide useful, structured, numerical data, that could collect data from a wide variety of sources that is relatively easy to analyse. Although these are clear advantages it is also acknowledged that such questionnaires also have the disadvantages of poor returns, time constraints on the respondents, lack of detailed responses as well as unfavourable personal responses from those approached. In addition I felt that a questionnaire would add breadth and a quantitative aspect to the data collected. This would allow for triangulation of the results with the school studies and the expert interviews.

The questionnaire was designed to determine the governance structure of the school and then examine Board: Head relationships within the particular school followed by a section on school development. The objective, in line with the research question was to see if any links between school leadership and development and governance structure could be determined.

The questionnaire was largely closed with a structured approach although respondents were given the opportunity to be more discursive if they wished. The questionnaire was kept brief and easy to complete without sacrificing too much detail. Following initial construction with the input of the school studies interviews

and from the literature review, the questionnaire was double piloted, firstly with a few peers, altered as a result of their feedback and then secondly with two of the people who were subsequently also interviewed as experts. (See next section). This was with the intention of making the questionnaire both valid in terms of data and easy to complete to maximise on the number returned. As Sampson points out:

“In terms of the general advantages of conducting a pilot ...there are potential benefits in putting a toe or two in the research waters before diving in. There are several issues here. It is only having gone through a process of analyzing and evaluating the limited data generated by a pilot that the kind of distance often required to focus on the wider issues of research importance is generally acquired. It is often only when the data is evaluated that any gaps in a research design begin to show up. Thus, a pilot may be regarded as essential “

Sampson (2004, p399)

Questionnaires survive or fall depending on the clarity and ease with which they are completed:

“It bears repeating that the wording of questionnaires is of paramount importance and that pre testing is crucial to its success. A pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire.”

Cohen et al (2000, p260)

The final questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was sent out, electronically, to some six hundred international schools. The sample and method of distribution were the outcome of an agreement with the Council of International Schools (CIS) that their membership be the sample and that CIS would have access to the results in order to add to their own research on governance in international schools. Thus the sample was large, over 600, but the sample was also a group who are, intrinsically, very busy and also suffer from ‘questionnaire fatigue’. The sample had the advantage of being self selecting for international schools. The questionnaire was constructed to ensure that all questions were answered by including required fields to allow progress. The eventual return was small, as expected, with 60 completed.

The return covered most geographical areas and included responses from schools representing all types of governance models. Although the percentage of returns was small and the data collected could not be used for any statistically valid analysis it did provide sufficient data to add constructively to the evidence collected.

All questionnaires were distributed to the Head of each school and collected anonymously, identified by unique number to prevent confusion between returns and to preserve confidentiality. The data, once collected, was identified only by number. Participants were given the option of identifying themselves if they wished a copy of the final research enquiry. Every effort was made to maintain the BERA ethical standards as they pertain to research.

Expert Interviews

Following the school studies and the questionnaires I felt that the question of relating school governance to school leadership and school development could be further examined through the use of expert interviews. The depth of knowledge and experience would allow for a greater sense of certainty to be drawn from the results.

Interviews are a method of collecting in depth information about an area of interest or as Cohen et al put it, an interview is:

“a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by the research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals.”

Cohen et al (2000, p269)

The use of such a method allows the interviewer to respond to both the subject matter and the interviewee and therefore to explore the subject matter in an open

ended way. Such a technique allows for a detailed study to be done, thus providing an opportunity to explore the area in depth. The drawback of the interview is that it can allow the interviewer to guide the interview towards an already determined end point.

“Interviews are usually seen as subjective experiences and so there is the risk of influence and bias.”

British Educational Research Association (2009)

Expert interviews were chosen as a way of not only adding to the information collected by the questionnaire in the specific area of governance and its links to school improvement, but also of exploring the area of international school management, governance and leadership in detail. Expert interview has been defined as:

“... a way of making tacit knowledge more explicit. A person can describe not only what was done but why, providing context and explaining the judgment behind the action.”

New York State (2008)

As Flick suggests, expert interviews:

“are seen ‘as a specific form of applying semi-structured interviews. In contrast to biographical interviews, here the interviewees are of less interest as a person than their capacities of being an expert for a certain field of activity. They are integrated into the study not as a single case but as representing a group.”

Flick (2006, p165)

The experts were chosen on the basis of their expertise and experience in the area of international education and the governance and leadership of international schools. CIS was approached along with other researchers or practitioners in the field of international education. A list was constructed and on the basis of the academic background, experience, and practice in the field of international school governance the final interviewees was selected. Five experts were chosen as I felt that this number would provide a broad set of data but not occupy too much time

on data collection. The five were then approached and all expresses a willingness to be involved in the study.

The interviews were conducted by telephone, semi-structured and based on a series of topic areas that were then explored in detail (see Appendix 3):.

“The advantage of the semi-structured interview is that the interviewer is in control of the process of obtaining information from the interviewee, but is free to follow new leads as they arise”

Partington (2001, p33)

The interviews followed a central theme of international school governance but did not stick to a prescribed set of questions. The general pattern of the questioning was to first gather biographical detail to support the categorisation of the individuals as experts, followed by a series of guided discussions related to the research topic. These topics were – models of international school governance and opinions about them; impact of governance on international school leadership, development and improvement; views on school management and influences on that management. The response to questions was noted and a summary of each is included in the results section.

Although it is clear that interviews are more open to bias than questionnaires the greater sense of interaction and the opportunity to explore opinion in greater depth was seen as an advantage of this method of data collection. No discourse analysis was undertaken due to the limits of time. As these interviews were targeted towards those with an acknowledged expertise in the field I felt that the method would allow for worthwhile and valid data to be collected. Best and Kahn, amongst others, concludes that expert interviews are a way of collecting valid and valuable information about an area of investigation:

“Validity is greater when the interview is based on a carefully designed structure thus ensuring that the significant information is elicited.”

Best and Kahn (1998, p 322).

The use of three methodologies would, it was hoped, provide a well founded conclusion based on the support of three sets of data. The concept of triangulation allows for a cross examination between the sets of data and thus allows for a greater degree of confidence in the general conclusions, tested as they are in a variety of ways.

The examination of methodologies available shows a broad range of different possibilities available to the social scientist when considering a research question including case study, action research, large scale statistical studies, various ways of qualifying or quantifying the area being investigated. In this case the eventual choice was determined as those best suited to provide a detailed picture of a small section of the area being examined with the hope and intention of clarity from the specific illuminating the general.

CHAPTER 4:RESULTS

Introduction

The result of this enquiry contains evidence derived from three main sources. These are individual school studies, a questionnaire and expert interviews held within the case study framework. Four school studies provided the foundation for further investigation using questionnaires and expert interviews. The questionnaire was based on the outcomes of the school studies and the literature review. Five experts in the field of international school governance and leadership were interviewed in a semi-structured format and the results recorded from the notes taken during those interviews. At the end of each section of results is a brief summary of the outcomes of that section. The results are completed by a summary of the overall findings.

School Studies

Introduction

The schools, which have been presented anonymously, will be described and their governance and management structures outlined. The implications of these structures on the development of the school will then be explored, taking into account results of interviews with senior administrators at each school, also presented anonymously, as well as relevant school documentation. Any changes in governance over the last twenty years will also be discussed, along with the implications of these changes.

School A

Description

Number of role: 550

Age range of students: 3-18

Country of operation: North Africa

Curriculum model: English national curriculum and IB Diploma

3 senior administrators interviewed: A, C and D

School A is a small international school situated in the capital city of a northern African, Arabic speaking state. The city is very large and the country has a rich history and culture. The school was the first English curriculum school of the city and was founded with the support of the British embassy and diplomatic staff. 'A' is a co-educational, K-12 (Years 1-13), independent, day school. The curriculum is broadly English derived, although the only curriculum offered in the final two years of schooling is the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. In lower years the school models itself on the English examination and assessment system. This included Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) at all Key stages and a mixture of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or the international version International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE).

'A' was founded, in 1976, as a primary school; after 14 years the decision was made to extend to a secondary school. The numbers slowly built up over the next 20 years and the school is now approximately 500 with students evenly split between the primary and secondary stages. The sixth form is very small, in part because IGCSE's are sufficient to gain access to further, tertiary, study in some of the local universities.

The school serves the expatriate population with a limit on the number of host nation students (20%) that are allowed to enrol. However the increase in number of students holding dual passports has meant a gradual increase in students who have a link to the host country even if not enrolled as host nationals. The total number of nationalities making up the student body is normally around 60, with Arab nations along with British and Commonwealth countries making up the majority of those represented. There is a turnover of students and staff that is

typically 20 - 25% p.a. This turnover means that the maintenance of a school culture is difficult, be it school, student or staff cultures. The staff is nearly all expatriate with the majority being British, recruited from overseas. There is a different pay scale for staff recruited from overseas, overseas nationals recruited from overseas being the most well paid, then overseas nationals recruited locally and finally host nationals being the least well paid.

The school is housed in rented accommodation, which is owned by one of the local churches. The buildings are inadequate with no playing fields, limited recreation space, one hall, poor classrooms and small, badly lit laboratories. Physical education takes place at a local sports club. The size of the school is limited by its poor facilities, particularly the number and size of classrooms. The school is completely reliant on fees, which are high, for its operation. There are no reserves and no capital fund. The major factors holding back school development are, as identified by all senior administrators over the last twenty years, the quality of the facilities, size of the school, overall budget/ financial position and the high turnover of staff.

Governance structure

The school has a governance structure that consists entirely of elected members who must be, by constitution, parents of students currently attending the school. Until 2000 the board of governors consisted of nine members, three elected annually for a three year term with any vacancies that occurred being filled from the election list. In 2000 this was changed to

“The XXX Society, and so indirectly the school itself, is governed by a board of nine directors, elected by the members of the XXXS from among the members of the XXX Society at an AGM every six years. Every two years, three board members are chosen by lot to resign; they may stand for re-election. Any seat on the board which falls vacant for other reasons- for example if a board member ceases to have children at the school and so ceases to be a member of the XXX Society - is filled immediately on the basis of votes at the previous election.”

School 'A' website, Governance (2008)

The change in election procedure was done, according to the head of the school at the time, with the aim of increasing the longevity of governors as turnover was felt to be too high. However the board remains a fully elected, parent body.

Analysis: School A

School 'A' has what might be described as a typical community, international school governance structure with an elected board made up exclusively of parents. Turnover is high, built into the structure by the governing regulations and the fact that the expatriate section of the parents has a high turnover. Many of the issues raised by the literature can be seen here. Every two years the parents stand for election and there is, therefore, a perceived need to present as a candidate with an agenda for change or point of difference, at the election. The outcome is not only a change within the governing body but also with the school objectives. As the student body can be broadly identified as Middle Eastern, British and Others, many of the elections result in a similar choice of members for the Board. The outcome is often political in basis with some members of the Board seeing themselves as representative of certain groups or positions. This could be seen in certain curricular issues e.g. the introduction of Arabic as a subject and then the extension of Arabic into early morning school and the informal adoption of a local curriculum for the language. This introduction was welcomed by the host nation parents and those from the Middle East. However, the response from expatriate parents was to raise the concern that resources were being applied to a particular group and not to the school as a whole. The responses to many issues both at board, management and staff levels, were often based on membership of a perceived community and were often petty.

The high turnover of board members and staff added to the political nature of the board and would seem to have a link to the high turnover of the principals and other senior staff.

“After two years I had had enough, in fact I was looking to move after my first year. Board meetings were long and ineffective; I seemed to spend my time dealing with the Board not the school.”

‘A.’ past principal, interview notes (2007)

“The capacity to plan was so limited. A new pastoral system was introduced after much research, thought and planning. Two years after I left it was dismantled by neglect.”

‘B.’ past head of senior school, interview notes (2007)

School A could be regarded as a typical example of an Elected Board international school. As could be seen in the literature review where Littleford suggested that parent only boards were building a time bomb into their governance, School A with an elected Board consisting only of parents would appear to have exploded a number of times.

International schools of this type have some difficulty in structuring long term plans mainly due to the turnover of board, staff and management. School A definitely fits this pattern. The first Principal served for 12 years, until the decision was taken to move from a primary only to a K-12 structure. At this point it was felt that he did not have sufficient expertise and his contract was not renewed. There followed a series of Principals and senior administrators combined with acting Principals. Overall there were 7 Principals in office over the next 13 years until the current incumbent took up the post, who has served three years. That this turnover has affected school development is beyond doubt. One of the school’s major development needs has been identified as infrastructure. A new school with appropriate facilities would allow the school to offer a better educational experience and allow it to grow to meet the needs of its market. A larger school would also be more resilient financially. The school planned a new purpose built campus twenty years ago but has yet to make this vision a reality. In addition the only change to the school curriculum since the introduction of the IB Diploma 15 years ago has been the changes required through the changes to the English

National Curriculum. In particular, the turnover of staff and administrators implies change within the school culture and sense of purpose.

"I was appointed as an Interim Principal and offered the permanent post but was happy to refuse. The strain of meeting the individual needs of the board meant that my capacity to move the school forward was limited."

'C.' Interim Principal (2007). Interview notes.

What is telling in this school is that over the thirty years of its existence it has had 8 Heads, at least 12 Chairs of Council and an almost constant turnover in both the Council and the staff of the school. The school is still in the same, inadequate, facilities that it was when founded and shows no ability to put its often made plans into action, be these plans about teaching, learning, staffing, facilities or curriculum.

"I was asked to leave after only two years, a record I thought until I spoke to a number of my colleagues in similar schools. One had only lasted a term before he was moved on. I was just getting to know the school and its needs, or so I thought."

'D.' previous Principal (2007) Interview notes.

There does seem to be a direct link between this type of governance structure and the development of the school. The very nature of the Board would seem to engender a sense of political unrest and therefore to a lack of consistency in the school's mission and a lack of agreement in how any mission might be achieved. In this case the lack of development of the school would appear to have a direct link to the Board structure, the high turnover of the Principal and the high turnover of the staff at the school. It is interesting to note that there is only one of the teaching staff still in service at the school who was in service fifteen years ago.

When those interviewed were asked about the links between the school development and the model of governance, they were unanimous in suggesting that the two were closely linked and that, in this case, not to the benefit of the school. All respondents suggested that members of the board had interfered with

staffing issues, infrastructure choices and financial issues; often it was felt, with an eye on their own personal position. All three interviewees mentioned that the board had contributed to their departure from the school, in all cases earlier than anticipated when they joined the school.

School B.

Number of role: 1850- 2000

Age range of students: 3-18

Area of operation: Latin America

Curriculum model: Host country national curriculum, English curriculum, IB

Diploma all delivered bilingually in English and Spanish.

3 senior administrators interviewed: E, F and G

Description

School 'B' is a large, coeducational, day, independent, bilingual school of approximately 1900 students. Situated in the suburbs of the capital city of one of the countries of southern Latin America, the school is old and very well established with strong traditions and a reputation for high academic achievement. Founded in the early 1800's the school has been, through its history, a day school, a boarding school, two single sex schools and it now occupies multiple campuses consisting of two kindergartens, two primary schools, one middle school and a senior school. The student and staff populations are very stable. 90% of the school leavers at the end of schooling joined the school in the kindergarten, as three year old students. The vast majority of students and staff are host nation nationals. A few members of staff are recruited from overseas to provide subject expertise in some of the subjects taught in English. The school aims to, and does, produce fluently bilingual (English/ Spanish) graduates who are all destined for tertiary level education.

For most of the school's history the curriculum offered was British in basis and this was formalised into a mixture of O-levels and A-levels. Following a national government decision in the middle of the 20th century, the school became bilingual

and bi-curricular offering both the host nation national curriculum and an English based version side by side. In the 1970's this was formalised into a Bachillerato Bilingue that met the needs of the host nation national curriculum, was delivered in two languages but included English external examinations. In the 1990's IGCSE's replaced the O-levels and the IB Diploma replaced the A-levels. Now all graduates leave the school with a national High school diploma and either an IB bilingual diploma or at least four IB certificates (for partial completion of the diploma). Most graduates continue their tertiary studies in the host nation but a significant number go to university in North America, the UK and Spain. The school is selective both in its intake and 'year on year' in that individual students who do not meet the passing grade, a level set by the school, either repeat the year or leave the school.

Governance

Founded by migrants in the early 1800's under the governance of the associated reform Church, the school has seen a stable history making it the oldest continuously existing school in the country. The school has a combination Board of Governors of whom a certain percentage must be active members of the church, ratified and appointed by the church, and two members past students at the school. In practice many of the members of the board are both past students and current parents as between one quarter and a third of the student body is made up of children of former pupils. Members of the board are presented by a Nominating Committee and, given that the reform congregation in a largely Catholic country is a small one, there have been occasions when suitable candidates for election have been hard to find. Board members serve for a limited term, 4 years, and can re-stand for election for one additional term. The member can then only stand for election again after a break of one year. Despite this there are a number of members who have served cumulatively over 20 years on the board. The chair of the board is elected for a three year term but must then stand down. Elections are 'one member one vote' and held on a 'first past the post basis'. The board consists of 12 voting members plus the addition of a number of ex-officio members, notably

the head of the school, the rector of the university and the administrator (chief financial manager) as well as the clerk to the board (who works directly for the board with particular responsibility for board tasks, primarily applications for financial aid and scholarships).

There is a very clear expectation and understanding that membership of the board is not representative and cannot involve any financial gain or influence on behalf of the member, or their children if they are students at the school. An effort is made to recruit members of the board to fill the non church places with people who have no history with the school and who can bring a special expertise to the board. Although the places for such members are limited, the induction of all new members makes the policies outlined above clear. The school and the board have a clear set of documented policies which are reviewed regularly. There is an induction of new members of the board and some, infrequent training of the board through internally managed workshops and retreats.

It could be said that this school has many of the features of good management or leadership. There were clear policies in place and a strong attempt was made to stick to policy and allow management to manage. However the board does blur the line between management and governance on occasions, like all boards must be tempted to do. There was a particular emphasis on financial management, the product of the financial chaos that grips the country periodically.

The board had a reputation for planning ahead and for making bold, innovative changes. These had included the starting of a private university, moving campus, the acquisition of land and a willingness to start new campuses as population distribution changed.

Analysis: School B

Although founded in early 1800's and with a well documented history of development and sustained improvement, the school has not been immune to the vagaries of governance ups and downs complicated by aspects of Latin American life. One board member once observed at a function to open a new building that all of the guests of honour, heads and other senior staff from the school's past had been fired from school service. One head had been fired twice, although serving some 16 years through his two stints in office. The board did try to keep a distance but was also prone to the sudden decision to resolve issues by removing senior people rather than trying to work through them. This would appear to be particularly true during times of national stress e.g. financial upset when a number of heads had rolled. The last fifteen years has seen three heads each of whom had completed single five year terms. The three heads were all appointed from outside the country which led to some clashes of culture between the board and head but also in what was expected of the staff - head relationship.

"There was a sense of authority and expectation that if not met almost always ended in the staff member being fired. It was part of the culture of the country. At the end of my time I was told that "if I was not in the boat rowing then I was best off out of the boat"

'E.' past head, interview notes (2007)

"I budgeted to fire six members of staff each year. There was no recourse in labour law to remove staff for non performance and indeed no real system of appraisal within the school for teaching or other professional staff. The method that had been developed was to calculate what was due under the law, a well understood formula, and then to call people in at the end of the year and say 'goodbye'. The staff knew that if they had an appointment with me on the first day after the students left they were not coming back the next year. On many occasions I was encouraged in that direction by members of the Council."

'F.' past head, interview notes (2007)

It would appear that despite having a well articulated form of governance there are still occasions when the Council members become over-involved in school affairs. This is often due to concern about the school brought on by the national context and culture. One of the three most recent heads, on being appointed and

accepting the headship of a different school, had the remainder of his contract paid out and was asked to vacate his office within a week, with the locks being changed before this process could be completed. This is not uncommon within a Latin American context as can be seen in the swift rotation of heads in many other schools in these countries. The longest serving heads are those who are the owners of their own schools.

This was my first headship and apart from the inevitable learning on the job and coming to terms with a new country and culture I loved it. The interaction with the board was wonderful and they were very supportive. However there was one cultural law that I got used to and this was that if a mistake was made then the outcome would be swift and final. My predecessor survived for years by doing as little major development as possible and keeping his head down.

'F.' past head interview notes (2007)

However it is clear that the governance structure of School B has stood it in good stead. The school is over 150 years old and has shown a history of development that has allowed it to survive and indeed to flourish over that time. Given the national context of financial and political swings the consistency and contribution that the school has made is significant. There is a sense of pride and great status as well as being of service associated with being elected to the board.

The combination board that supports school B has worked well but is still prone to sudden decisions re management and to seeing departure of Heads as one way of resolving issues. The elected nature of many of the post on the board, drawn from a small pool of candidates, does suggest that despite the strength of policy and history the board has had moments of instability which have affected the school development. This could be attributed to the culture of the country as well as the nature of the board.

It is clear to me that the, occasional, extreme approach to man management taken by the school and its board was cultural rather than structural. It was the way business was done in that country. There was no shame associated

with being fired; it was regarded as being part of the grander scheme and just the way things worked.

'G.' past head interview notes (2007)

It is also clear that this is not a perfect system of governance or leadership. The school went through various periods of inertia or of introspection that was not in the best interest of the students. The level of expectation of students within a school that prided itself on its academic standards and the quality of its preparation of its graduates was, at times, very low. This was the outcome of low expectations from all sections of the school community. Once this was identified to the board as an issue they were very supportive of a drive to change the situation. The IB Diploma was introduced and by the end of a five year introduction period 96% of the cohort were attempting the Diploma with a greater than 85% success rate. So the school continues to serve its community and country in a substantial and significant way. The school has served as a model for many other schools in the city and there is now a long established tradition of bi-lingual or tri-lingual education throughout the country. The governance structure, although prone to lapses and actions that might be seen as not being in the best interest of the students or school, is supporting the school and its development.

When asked the direct question as to what impact the board had had on school development the response was generally positive.

"Forward looking; supportive and proactive; always looking to improve."

'E.', 'F.' and 'G.' past heads, interview notes (2007)

The sense of partnership was strong and the recent history of the school was one of development and improvement over a number of board membership changes. Issues of curriculum change, staff turnover, staff development and infrastructure investment were all mentioned as areas of school development which had improved during the tenure of the three heads interviewed.

School C

Number of role: 700 - 850

Age range of students: 3-18

Country of operation: Australia

Curriculum model: State curriculum and IB MYP

5 senior administrators/board members interviewed: H, I, J, K and L

Description

School 'C' is an independent school, 80 years old, with between 700 - 850 students. The school had been founded as a reform church boys' school with significant support from the local church. Some twenty odd years ago the congregation merged with three other churches to form a new entity, the Uniting Church. The new church retained a constitutional role within the school and its governance. In the early 1970's the school became co-educational and the number of boarding students dropped from 50% to 10%. This was a reflection of the changes in the host nation population with the rural areas reducing in population and the urban areas increasing. The school was well established within its city, with a good reputation, particularly for less academic students and for the breadth of its curriculum and extra curricular offerings. The city has a large number of independent schools and a declining, ageing population and is, therefore, a very competitive environment. The school was in the process of coping with gradually declining student numbers and had just undertaken a large fund raising campaign to build a new science block, with only marginal success. A number of other independent schools in the city had introduced various parts of the IB curricula as a way of providing a 'difference' and therefore a market edge. The then board and chair of the board decided to follow suit and started the process by appointing a new head with international experience and the mandate to move the school towards a greater international profile, including IB curriculum.

Governance

Originally the school had a governing body that was appointed by the church, consisting of 8 members. As the school developed the board became a self perpetuating group, membership of which was ratified by the church. The board had responsibility for all aspects of the school's management with the exception of the membership of the board, of which a certain percentage were expected to be practising members of the Uniting Church; in addition the church had to ratify the election of all board members. In practice, however, the last thirty years had seen the board move away from this close association to a point where they did not even inform the church of the outcomes of the elections and membership of the church was largely ignored. Over the years the school had become increasingly secular in student and parent population.

The board developed a process whereby a small group of selected governors, the executive committee (made up of the chairs of the sub-committees) acted as a nominating committee and proposed a slate of candidates in order of preference from the perspective of the committee. These were then voted on by the board as a whole. The practice had become for the board to elect the slate unopposed and without much discussion. The board had grown to a 14 member group but over time this growth continued and two parent representatives (voting), an alumni representative (voting), three student representatives and three staff representatives (all non-voting) were added. Thus the final board was well over twenty strong. The broad representation meant that, in practice, the executive took any decision that was deemed sensitive and then that was taken to the board for ratification, sometimes in very inexplicit terms. The constitution had not been updated for over 30 years and there was a significant mismatch between the constitution and the practice of the board. The church was aware of some of this and had approached the board on a number of occasions seeking to reduce the size of the board and to update the constitution. This process had stalled and no changes were anticipated. The board met once a quarter and between meetings delegated decisions to a variety of sub-committees; executive, infrastructure, finance, marketing and education. The result was that the board lost contact with

what was going on in the school and left most decisions to the sub committees, particularly the executive committee.

The board had managed its growth by looking within the parent community for its membership so that of the 17 voting members all but three were current parents of the school. The remaining three were all past students of the school, two of whom were also parents of past students. Places on the board were regarded as a status symbol within the community and there was significant jockeying for places in what had become an unofficial election through relationship with those already on the board.

Analysis: School C

Many of the issues that were identified within the literature could be seen within this governance structure. The large number of current parents on the board, 14, and the cumbersome system of sub committees had produced a group that did not communicate within it and where there was no clear understanding of the mission of the school. Many of the members had become members in order to contribute to the education of their children and they left the council when their children left the school. With such a large group turnover was high and understanding low.

Although a self perpetuating structure over time the board had become one with many features of a parent elected model, a very large parent elected version at that. The board therefore was prone to a short term view, politics and group think. The Littleford time bomb could be said to be ticking here also.

I attended four meetings a year and did not really understand what was going on. I trusted that the Exec knew what they were doing and I let them get on with it. I was worried about the level of debt but left that to the Finance committee.

'H.' past student and board member interview notes (2007)

The board chair decided to introduce a period of change to coincide with the retirement of a long serving head (14 years). His replacement was appointed with

an agenda of change. This change was aimed at all areas of the school, finances, curriculum, staffing, fundraising and recruitment of students, as well as management structures. The agenda for change was one promoted by the chair, agreed to by the executive of the board, but the board as a whole was not involved in the process with some members not even being aware that such an agenda was being taken up.

The process began as a broad ranging plan to address issues of marketing, infrastructure, staffing, finance and curriculum. The first stage of the marketing and curricular changes began with the introduction of the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP). This was allied to changes in financial management and marketing to promote the school within the international market. The number of international students increased, most attending as boarders. The stated intention was to move from MYP to the IB Diploma and then to the Primary Years Programme (PYP). A seven year process was envisaged for implementation. Two years after the new head arrived there was a change in chair of board. The new chair had not been part of the executive which had made the original set of plans and he opposed them, in particular the issue of a greater number of international students and the international curriculum. As the executive was only five strong and the new chair had been appointed along with a new treasurer and vice-chair, it was possible to question and alter the whole direction of the school without broader discussion or reference.

The executive discussion was a new world. From one agenda to another! It was an overnight change. It was as if all that discussion and planning had never been.

‘I.’ member of executive committee, Interview notes (2007)

I felt the school was moving away from its roots and needed to change direction. We were founded as a school for South Australians and needed to return to that.

‘J.’ past chair of board, meeting notes (2004)

This change in direction led to conflict and distrust between the head and the chair and within the executive and the board. The conflict became damaging, a number of members of the board resigned and the head moved on. The extent of the polarization was such that the church became involved and decreed that the system of governance had to change.

Following much discussion with the church and the new head of school C, a board of 10 was determined. This board would meet monthly and would not delegate any decisions but would maintain a sense of awareness of what the school was doing.

Following the departure of the Principal we were required by the church to come to a meeting with the expectation that the governance would change, and change according to what the church understood to be good practice.
'L.' member of executive committee, interview notes (2007)

Having worked with different governance models I know that a board of over 20 governors is unwieldy, and so I requested, as a condition of accepting the job ... that the Council's numbers be reduced to a realistic level. The Council itself had already recognised the need for a reduction in the number of its members. ... We now have a Council of 10.
'K.' Head 2005 - present, (2008 p65).

The new board deliberately looked outside the current parent community for its membership and there are now only two current parents, in a non representative role, serving as trustees/board members.

School C is an almost classic example of governance gone wrong but with the best of intentions. Too many parents with too many agendas and poor communication, added to an agenda for change which had not been argued through at the board level, meant that the incoming head, who was succeeding a long standing 'icon' of the school, had little chance of succeeding. When the changes led to upset the easiest option was to blame the head and to move on. In the end the school has benefited by being guided through the turmoil by the church and ending with a much more effective governance structure that is supporting the new head.

This is now the best Council I have ever worked with.
'K.' Head 2005 - present, (2008 p65).

The response to questions about the board and development of the school were mixed. The current head was full of praise for the board and its support of him and his ideas. He was particularly fulsome in his praise for the new board structure. The previous two heads were much more circumspect. Neither of them had felt supported and one of them felt victimised by the board. In both cases it was felt that the size of the board and its meeting structure had meant that there were too many meetings and not enough time to act. All three saw a strong link between the functioning of the board and school development/ improvement.

School D

Number of role: 600

Age range of students: 3-18

Continent of operation: South Asia

Curriculum model: MYP, American system including High school diploma and IB Diploma

3 senior administrators/board members interviewed: M, N and O

School Description

The school is one of the older schools in south Asia and the oldest international school in the area. The school was founded over 100 years ago as a school for the children of Christian missionaries. Nearly 40 years ago the school changed its mission to become a Christian international school with legal status as a 'society'. Twenty years ago the school, for reasons of legal protection, changed to become a section 25 company i.e. not for profit. The school also is defined as a company operating as a minority educational organisation, allowing for further legal protection under the Indian constitution.

The school is a residential, co-educational school with the mission described as follows:

“XXX is an autonomous residential school with a broad college-oriented curriculum, serving young people from a wide diversity of cultures. The School's academic program is intentionally set within a community life based on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and devoted to service in India and the whole human community.”
Mission statement (1994)

Governance

The school is now owned by an association which retains the power of appointment of the head, the constitution, make up of the board as well as the purchase or sale of land and the final budget. It delegates the remainder of its authority to a ‘Council of Directors’, a board who in turn set policy, overview the finances, set long term goals, appoint four senior members of staff and delegate the remaining tasks to the head of the school and the school management. Membership of the association must be Christian in order to retain ‘minority’ status. Membership of the board is open to all faiths.

“XXX is a non profit company, registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act 1956. The company is incorporated under a Memorandum of Association. As a minority owned, non profit company the members of the association are required to be Christian. The main objectives of the association are:

- 1. To establish, manage and maintain school(s) and other educational institutions as a minority institution based on Christian principles, for the purpose of providing students of many nationalities, communities and creeds an opportunity to obtain a quality education and to develop spiritually, morally, socially and physically as whole persons.*
- 2. To provide a creative, high quality academic program with a curriculum which values learning as an end in itself and is also accredited by appropriate national and international agencies for college preparatory education.*
- 3. To promote research and exchange programs and to undertake associations with other schools and institutions engaged in similar pursuits.*
- 4. To provide a multicultural Christian environment within which students and staff together are helped:*
 - a. To develop an awareness of and concern for global issues, such as the environment, wealthy and poverty, communalism, development and colonialism and justice and peace*
 - b. To develop respect for the dignity and worth of others as fellow human beings*
 - c. To develop a greater appreciation for and an ability to see the strengths and weaknesses of all cultures, both their own and others*

- d. *To develop a particular awareness and appreciation of the cultures of Tamil Nadu, India and South Asia*
5. *To take over the affairs, assets and liabilities of the XXX School, an association registered under the Societies Registration Act 21 of 1860 as successor in interest.*

Membership of the association is by invitation and normally for a term of 3 years, designed in such a way that one third of the members come to the end of their term each year. Following a second consecutive term a person may not be re-elected for at least one year by the end of which they may be stand again for re-election.

The association retains responsibility for the establishment of a Council of Directors including the election of a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, the appointment of the Principal, who would also be the Secretary of the association, oversee fiscal and budgeting policies and any decision relating to the purchase or sale of land. Other responsibilities are then delegated through the Council of Directors to the Council or the Principal as is determined by the Council.”

School D Website 2008

The board is self-perpetuating with a nominations committee. The board appoints the nominating committee whose sole task is the identification of prospective members and their final nomination. The board then elects new members for a three year term – which can be followed by a second three year term which then must be followed by a break of at least one year. The association elects the chair, vice chair and treasurer of the association who also take up the same role on Council.

Analysis: School D

School D is over 100 years old. The initial governance structure was an appointed board with each mission appointing a designated board member. When the school became a society the appointment procedure was altered to create a self perpetuating board with a few *ex officio* members. The move to a company saw a continuation of this board structure. Therefore over the last 40 years the school

has been governed through a self perpetuating structure. During that time there has been a sense of community and purpose which has not altered, with one exception. There have been four heads who have served an average of 8 years each with the longest serving 12. The mission of the school, having been established, has been upheld and all members of Council and staff are expected to know and support this mission. It would appear that the system supported by an independent nomination committee, induction into the mission of the school and the role of a board member aided by additional training does work.

The school has an excellent reputation, particularly for its success with the IB Diploma and for its international approach. Demand for the school is high and although half of its students are host nation nationals between 80 and 90 percent of the graduates go to Universities or Colleges in the US, Canada, UK or Australia. The school is in high demand with at least two applicants for each place. The school has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution to its students and to the country and city in which it is located. The governance structure has served it well allowing it to successfully translate its mission from serving one community to another without losing its underlying sense of mission. The self perpetuating nature of the board would seem to have served the school and its community well for the time of the school's existence.

However there was one period of four years during which the school had three heads i.e. a head, an acting head and an interim head. The first head served just over two years, having succeeded a long serving (12 years) and much loved predecessor. He left suddenly having been informed by the board that his contract was not going to be renewed. In his letter to the parents he informed the community that he was leaving as he was no longer supported by the board. He was temporarily succeeded by his vice principal in an acting capacity and then by an interim. At the time the board was in some form of chaos, with the chair who had engineered the departure of the head resigning and no current member being prepared to succeed her. The resolution depended on the chair of the nominating

committee asking one particular person to join the board and to take up the post of chair. The new chair then appointed a new head and the school has had four years of stability, growth and achievement since.

“In my first year as Chair I came up to the school thirteen times and spent at least three days there each visit. Thankfully that is no longer required.”
‘M.’ chair of board 2004 – interview notes (2007)

When asked about the links between board and school development the three heads interviewed all agreed that the link was a crucial one.

“My Chair has been crucial, when needing advice or assistance he has been wonderful. When looking to implement change his support is invaluable.”
‘N’ head of school 2005 – interview notes (2007)

Similar issues as those raised in the other interviews were identified here. Infrastructure development, policy development, finances, staff retention and curriculum change were all identified as areas which had benefited from a partnership between school management and board. It seems that all models of school governance, even such stable ones as in this school, are open to destructive moments. The difference would appear to be in frequency and the ability to recover rather than the capacity to make mistakes.

Summary of School Studies

The school studies show that there is no perfect form of governance; indeed all of the models examined had at least one episode where the actions of the board could be interpreted as putting the continuity of school development at risk. The action that they were most prone to was to interfere in the working of the school and in particular to question the competence, or interfere in the work of, senior members of staff. When such actions were questioned and resisted the subsequent steps sometimes included the removal of the staff member, including the head. Although this was true of all of the schools what was also clear is that the

schools with higher numbers of current parents on the Board were more prone to this type of action. This was particularly true of School 'A' where the turnover was truly remarkable.

The areas identified by those interviewed as being linked to school development or improvement (and which were incorporated into the questionnaire) included budget allocation for infrastructure, staffing and staff development, curriculum development, infrastructure development, examination results, and links between board and head. A sense of confidence in the relationship between the head and board and in particular between the head and the chair of the board was also seen as crucial. As all of these schools were fee paying, independent schools the link between governance and management as well as the overall sense of school leadership was also universally seen as crucial to the school's development.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see appendix 1) was constructed as outlined in the methodology section and was distributed electronically to the heads of schools which are members of CIS, i.e. over 600 schools. The eventual return was 60 i.e. just under 10%. This is a low return although not an unusual figure for questionnaires distributed in this manner. Returns can be improved by a reminder but in this case, having sent out the questionnaire CIS then said that they could not send out a reminder. The low response certainly precludes any generalisation of results to international schools more widely. The responses do, however, inform this study and provide some indications as to where further study might be focused.

Of the 60 questionnaires returned a substantial majority came from proprietary schools (those with an owner) rather than community-based schools, with the next largest sample from schools with parent elected boards and then mixed boards

(some members appointed, some elected); only three heads from self-perpetuating schools responded.

Table 1.

Model of Governance	Number of Responses
Proprietary	29
Parent Elected	17
Mixed	11
Self-perpetuating	3
Total	60

The tables below show the average length of service of heads and chairs within the different schools classified by governance model.

Table 2

Heads	0-5	6-10	>10	Total
Proprietary schools	9	13	7	29
Parent Elected	13	4	0	17
Mixed	9	2	0	11
Self-perpetuating	1	2	0	3
Total	32	21	7	60

Table 3

Chair	0-5	6-10	>10	Total
Proprietary schools	11	14	4	29
Parent Elected	13	4	0	17
Mixed	11	0	0	11
Self-perpetuating	0	3	0	3
Total	35	21	4	60

The outcome of this analysis is interesting in that the length of service of heads is significantly shorter in mixed (i.e. some elected parents some appointed board members) and parent elected schools. It can be seen that there is a clear distinction between the proprietary (and self-perpetuating) schools when compared to the parent elected and mixed boards. The average length of service of the chair

is half as long in those boards with a significant number of publicly elected members when compared to those who, although they may have representation, do not have a public election method of selecting either chair or board members.

There would appear to be a link between the length of service of the chair of the board and that of the head of the school, although it is not possible from this enquiry to say what that relationship is and if there is any direct, causal link between the two sets of data. If Littleford's (2005, p1) statement that no head outlasts four chairs is taken as reasonable, then high turnover of chairs will inevitably lead to higher turnover of heads. As these results showed a difference between the various models of governance and the length of tenure of both head and board chair I ran T-tests to ascertain if there were any statistically significant differences.

The t-test is the most commonly used method to evaluate the differences in means between two groups.... Theoretically, the t-test can be used even if the sample sizes are very small..
Hill, & Lewicki, (2007).

Although the results are based on a limited sample the tests do show a significant difference in the case of both heads and chairs tenure when the length of service within either parent elected boards or mixed boards is compared to proprietary schools. The use of statistics here is questionable and I have not done extensive analysis. The tests done were for interest and support but too much should not be read into the result.

This result is interesting for the average length of tenure of heads is double in proprietary schools compared to either parent elected boards or mixed boards: the average service of heads in parent elected boards was close to 4 years and for mixed boards was under four years; for proprietary schools the average length of service was over 8 years.

Further analysis of some of the other results did not result in any clear cut findings. For example there was no discernible relationship between the model of

governance and the types of Board management structures. Most proprietary and all other schools had Boards and they varied across all structures (Qu 8 and 9) and no inference could be drawn from the results.

Questions 12, 13 and 14 examined the relationship between board and head, looking at support, authority and satisfaction with board leadership. The responses show that virtually all Heads that are in post are happy with the current state of the relationship. The table below shows the number and percentage of respondents who gave a positive (4 or 5 on five point scale: very or fully satisfied) or average/negative response (3, 2 or 1 on a five point scale) to these three questions.

Table 4

Governance	Very or Fully Satisfied	Average-Low Satisfaction
Proprietary	75	12
Parent Elected	37	14
Mixed	11	0
Self-perpetuating	2	0

Q. 12, 13, and 14

It would appear that most heads in post are satisfied with the support they receive from their board. There was no relationship that could be seen between the model of governance and the degree of satisfaction with board and chair support. One question that could be asked is: is there a tipping point when the sense of security is quickly lost? Is this an all or nothing area, when once trust is broken then the whole area changes from satisfied to dissatisfied? As one head of a parent elected board, who was very dissatisfied with their board, comments -

The board has managed to remove the past three directors (head) and have rescinded a contract that they signed with me last November. So they signed a contract for two years, and then decided to remove it at the end of January. They have acted unethically and broken several accreditation standards. Their lack of experience with acceptable standards in international schools, as well as a lack of knowledge of how international school Boards should operate is enormous.

Questionnaire response. (2008)

Certainly, given the high rate of turnover of both heads and chairs it is surprising that virtually all respondents seemed so positive. It may be that the group of respondents is self selecting and only those who felt positive were prepared to go on record while those who were less positive may have also been more wary.

The response to Q. 15 did not show any differentiation in that all models of governance generally had a system of appraisal in place. The normal method across all types of governance was appraisal by the board, annually, against pre set objectives – which generally included budget, enrolment, staff turnover and strategic goals amongst the objectives. There was no link between the presence of an appraisal system and the longevity of either the head or the chair. Nor was there any demonstrable link between the appraisal system and sense of support between the board or board chair and the head. The only interesting statistic was that 24%, or 7 schools, with a proprietor had no formal appraisal system in place. However there was no link between the lack of appraisal and the average length of service of either head or chair.

One aspect of the questionnaire results is that they did not show any link between the model of governance and the tenure of either chair or head to the attempts to measure school improvement or development. Interestingly there was no discernable difference between the Head's perceptions of the quality of their facilities (Q. 16 – 19), the staff morale (Q. 20 – 23), Student demand and enrolment (Q. 23 – 26), academic outcomes (Q. 27 – 29) or financial disbursement (Q. 30 – 31). In relation to staff morale this may be the result of a self serving sense of satisfaction but the areas of staff turnover and quality of facilities could be expected to be genuine assessments. The scores given are the average of the sum of the scores given on the five point scale.

Table 5

Governance model	Facilities Ave score Q.16-19	Staff Morale Ave score Q. 20-21	Staff Turnover Ave annual %
Proprietary	14.5	8.4	14.1
Parent Elected	15.5	8.3	19
Mixed	14.7	7.6	15.8
Self-perpetuating	15.3	7.9	12.6

The enrolment at the school did not show any relationship between tenure of head and demand. Some schools were growing, others static, a few shrinking but only slightly. The issue of enrolment would appear, at least from this study to be affected by more than the long term presence of a head. Perhaps this is not surprising as many international schools are part of a relatively small educational choice for many of the parent body.

It was possible to compare academic outcomes where those of the schools responding offered the IB diploma. The IB Diploma is a six subject, externally assessed, end of secondary school qualification. Each subject is assessed out of a possible seven points. In addition students have to complete three additional requirements – an extended essay, a theory of knowledge course and a series of commitments including community service which allow for three additional points. Therefore the total points available within the Diploma are 45. Twenty four points is regarded by the IB as a pass. (For a detailed description please refer to the IB website <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/slideb.cfm>) Here again it was clear that the questionnaire had not been discriminating enough and there was no relationship that could be determined between governance model, or longevity of either head or chair and academic outcomes. In proprietary schools take up of the IB Diploma ranged from 30% of cohort to 100% with an average diploma result ranging from 28 to 34 points from a possible 45. In parent elected schools the range was 50% - 92% for take up and the average diploma result was 27 – 33. For mixed board schools, figures were 50%- 85% and 30.2 – 32 respectively. Only one of the self perpetuating schools was an IB Diploma school where take up was 75% and 35

the average diploma result. Within all school types no relationship could be established between length of service of head or chair and academic outcomes.

Similarly no relationship could be established between the issues of governance or the related issues of head and chair tenure and the financial health of the school. All schools that responded reported generally healthy enrolment and financial status. The amount spent on teaching staff and on their professional development, expressed as a percentage of the total budget, varied considerably but not in relation to either the model of governance or the longevity of the head and/or chair of board. The value given by some heads as to the percentage spent on staff salary and benefits seems in some cases to be very low e.g. 38 or 43 % compared to at least 60% in any school I have ever had the financial data on. This raises the issue of understanding the question and using the same basis for calculation. All schools surveyed raised the vast majority of their annual budget from school fees, with the lowest amount being 90% of budget.

Table 6

Governance model	% of Budget spent on teaching staff benefits	% of Budget spent on teaching staff pro-dev.
Proprietary	38 – 80 %	0.3 – 5 %
Parent Elected	43 – 67 %	0.5 – 6 %
Mixed	55 – 75 %	0.8 – 2 %
Self-perpetuating	53 – 64 %	1.2 – 2.3 %

It may be that a questionnaire is not the best way to examine the link between school development and school leadership at either governance or administrative levels and a more discriminating method could be employed.

Summary

The results of the questionnaire did not provide as clear a picture of any link between school governance, leadership and development as I had hoped. There was no discernable connection between the governance model and such issues as student outcomes or staff levels of turnover. This may have been because I was

asking the wrong audience (i.e. the Heads of the schools) or because the instrument was not discriminating enough, or because the sample was too small. Certainly the input of the school studies had not resulted in an instrument that provided sufficient discrimination to provide results of substance.

However one set of outcomes was of interest. There was a link between the governance model and the length of service of both head and chair. The mean length of service in the schools with parent elected boards was 3.7 and 3.1 years respectively. If the suggestion made in the literature, that the head and board are crucial to the development of the school, is accepted then it is clear that some disruption of school improvement and development must be taking place and that this questionnaire was not sufficiently discriminating to determine what those outcomes or limitations were.

Expert Interviews

I interviewed five experts in the area (presented anonymously here as V, W, X, Y, and Z) on international school governance. These five were selected on the basis of their involvement in international education and international school management, their reputation and the quality of their published works. The interviews were semi structured following a three stage process. Stage one was to establish, through biographical detail, the expert nature of the interviewee. Stage two was a general discussion based on the literature and led by me on the subject of the models of governance that may be common in international schools. This stage led to an agreement as to what the models of governance were and which models the experts felt able to comment on. Stage three was discursive and involved asking for opinion from the experts as to their thoughts on international school governance, which were the more effective and why. The interviews were all telephone interviews with the discussion recorded on the computer as the interview progressed, and with hand written notes. Although I had met a number of the experts at some time none of them had any link with the schools involved in the

school studies. Two of them did have links with the questionnaire, having been part of the trial.

There was agreement from all interviewed, individually, that we could discuss school governance on the basis of five models. These models were outlined in a number of papers by a variety of authors including CIS and Littleford (2005), as follows:

- Owned i.e. Proprietary
- Self-perpetuating
- Fully elected
- Fully appointed
- Combination or mixed i.e. some members elected and some appointed

These are the same as those models which emerged from the literature review.

Expert Interview 1 (V)

Background

V has worked in five schools, one national, four international. He has been head of two of these and deputy head of a third. He has 25 years in leadership positions within schools. During his professional career in leadership he has worked with 1 elected board of all parents, 1 elected board containing some parents, 1 externally appointed board and 1 self perpetuating board with members elected from a group of trustees. In addition to this experience he has been involved on the board of the Council of International Schools, CIS; has participated in governance training programs run by CIS; has been involved in the re-writing of the CIS governance training program for school trustees and has led school governance workshops on behalf of CIS.

Interview

V started by summarising his background and then was asked what his view of board structure was on school development. His view was that the link between

board and head of school is crucial to any school. Given his personal experience he suggested that:

“There is a direct link between the structure of a school board and the success of the school.”

‘V.’ (2008) interview notes

He was strongly of the opinion that any board structure that increased the rate of turnover of the head of the school and its staff was one that would limit what the school could achieve. This was particularly important in relation to the staff culture and its influence on the classroom. He quoted Fullan as saying

“It is not turnover that is the problem; it is discontinuity that is the problem.”

‘V.’ (2008) interview notes

In the light of this view and of his experience he was very clear when it came to different structures of governing bodies.

- Self perpetuating – He saw these as being the most stable and most constructive of school board models. The boards that he had experience with, of this type, had a group of trustees (about 50) who were invited or elected into this status. From this group the board was selected, or elected. The strength of this method V saw as continuity.

“This type of board has agreed on the mission and vision, there may be turnover but those coming on to the board have the same objectives. So turnover does not mean discontinuity of progress or direction.”

‘V.’ (2008) interview notes

During his time he had seen all different types of boards and those with some form of self perpetuating board were the ones with the more stable staff and management.

- Proprietor – V had no experience with this type of school and therefore was unable to comment other than to say he had heard of some successful schools of this type.

- Mixed and Appointed – Although he had no direct experience with these types of board he did feel that they were probably prone to issues of a lack of interest and lack of continuity. He felt there would be a tendency to appoint parents to the board which in turn would lead to a short term view of the school. Either that or there would not be sufficient interest from the board members.
- Elected – These types of boards were felt to be poor and often unworkable. *“Bound to fail”* was the initial comment. This was felt to be especially true of boards where all members are elected.

“Such boards are predicated on change. No prospective member standing for election does so on a no change platform. Therefore they always stand on a change agenda and when elected feel that they have a mandate for that agenda. Therefore a change agenda is built into the system, thus building into the system a constant need to change.”

‘V.’ (2008) interview notes

Overall V was much in favour of self perpetuating boards when it came to the issues of school development, longevity of staff and management and the ability to maintain a vision or mission for the school.

In general V’s view on governance was that continuity was crucial. *‘Governance must be focused on the long term and on policy’*. In order to do so the level of trust between board and head of school was essential. In order to build this trust time was needed. The longevity of the head not only allowed this sense of trust and strength of relationship to build but also was important for:

“The longevity of the Head is crucial in creating the culture that will allow innovation, leadership and development to take place.”

‘V.’ (2008) interview notes.

On the issue of size of board he was of mixed views. He could see that small boards were more easily managed but also felt that the larger boards suffered less when one or two members left. There was *‘less impact of turnover’*.

However he did not see a self perpetuating board as being a certain recipe for success. He could recall a number of schools where a self perpetuating board/ head had failed to maintain a working relationship and had parted ways, in his view to the detriment of the school. He quoted Carver as saying that

'Boards of non profit organisations were a group of competent people doing an incompetent job'.

Quoted by V

Expert Interview 2 (W)

Background

W started working in education in 1968. He taught from then to 1980. He then moved into international education within international schools where he worked from 1980 until 2002. He then moved back to the US where he has worked for one year at university and then took up a post of consultant and trainer for governance related areas. During his time outside the US N was head of four schools for a total of 19 years; in Europe and Latin America. These schools varied from a small K-8 school to large multi campus schools of over 1000.

These schools were all American curriculum schools in an international setting. They had varied governance structures. One had a board with some members (3) elected with the others appointed, another had an all elected board on 2-year terms, the next was a board of nine within a self perpetuating structure that changed its constitution to allow for two elected representatives, and the last was self perpetuating. In addition to this experience N has, through membership of accreditation teams, the running of board training workshops and the running of chair/ head workshops, had contact with between 75 and 100 schools and knowledge of their governance systems. W is now a consultant on governance issues and aids international schools in training their trustees and heads on governance.

Interview

The interview opened on the theme of board models and after some discourse it was agreed to base our further discussion on the concept of five models

1. Proprietary
2. Elected
3. Self Perpetuating; which was described as 'looking within themselves'
4. Mixed and
5. Fully appointed i.e. by an embassy or sponsoring company.

W did not feel able to comment on proprietary schools as he had no experience with them and so we excluded them from further discussion.

He began commenting that he felt one of the issues for all boards was that the school community generally had little idea as to what either the board's or the principal's responsibilities were. *'Most communities do not know what the board or the principal does.'* Education of the community, good communication as well as board training for all trustees was his suggestion as to how to avoid some of the confrontations and dismissals that he had come across within his time as an advisor in this area.

He then followed with some general comments on how Boards could function.

Any governing Council or Board or Trustees must work on the essentials of living by the Mission and therefore accepting the Vision with the view of the next twenty years. This allows the relationship between the Governors and the Principal to be based on a common understanding of where the school is going and what its purpose is.

'W.' (2008) Interview notes

The main message was that trustees should focus on the long term within the context of the school's mission and vision. W felt strongly that elected boards do not *'live by the mission'* and that therefore they worked *'year by year or month by month'*. This led to an existence that was short term and political. He suggested that elected board members *'want to change the ethos'* of the school as they are

elected on an agenda that is based on a change from the current practice or policies of the board. The other areas of importance to boards apart from adherence to the Mission and a focus on the future were financial control and policy determination, the later two being in consultation with the principal.

He finished this section with an un-attributed quote

'if you do not know where you are going then any path will get you there'
'W.' (2008) interview notes

He then went on to order the models from best to worst based on his experience.

This order was

1. Self perpetuating
2. Appointed
3. Combination and
4. Fully Elected

The interview then moved to cover the issue of why he had put these models in this order and what he saw as the relative strengths and weaknesses of the different models.

W outlined that he felt that self perpetuating boards can search for and encourage the people they need onto the board, thus making sure that they have the relevant expertise among the trustees. They also are more likely to take a long term view of the school. He commented that self perpetuating boards do not have as many current school parents on the board and therefore are less prone to the making of decisions on the basis of what might be best for their own children. Also he felt that the slight sense of disinterest in the day to day running of the school was a positive feature. In his experience such boards were more likely to leave the head and management of the school alone to get on with the administration of the school and to focus on the long term. He did feel that the down side is that there is a possibility of such boards becoming '*elite clubs*' and of becoming out of touch with the school.

In relation to the other models W felt that they all lacked something. In the case of the appointed boards he felt that there was often a lack of interest, as the board members were put in place by an embassy or company without any background and possibly interest. Hybrid boards were better if the number of representatives was kept to a limit e.g. *'a parent or a teacher and or an alumni'* was the suggestion. Fully elected boards were not felt to be of any value. In fact W recalled from his own career that the one school that he had left after only two years was one with a fully elected board. W felt strongly that an elected board was unlikely to ever provide a school with long term stable governance. It was difficult to get the *'right people on the bus'*, the agenda would keep changing and any training was quickly lost through turnover. All in all, W felt that elected boards always created some problem and that this was often expressed by high turnover within the board and with the head of the school.

Finally W turned to the impact of the board on the head of the school and on the school itself. *'The most key element in a school is the relationship between the head of the school and the chair of the board'* was his opening statement. Continuity of both board members and the head of the school were very important to the school and its capacity to meet new challenges and to continue to develop or improve. In particular W felt that long term heads were *'well established and more difficult to bully'* and therefore more able to focus on the school's mission and development.

In summary W was a strong advocate for self perpetuating boards and longevity of both board membership and heads of schools. He was clearly and emphatically against elected boards, which he felt were far too often damaging to schools.

Interview 3 (X)

Background

X came from a business background prior to joining an international educational group in July 2004. His business career took him mostly to Asia where he spent 17

years working for a commercial organisation. During this time he was on the board of three different schools. In addition to times spent as chair of these boards he also was a member of the board of a group running a large number of schools. Following early retirement he took up the educational post, where his role includes the implementation of strategies as determined by his Board as well as the day to day oversight of services. These services include but are not limited to:

- Accreditation
- Teacher and leadership searches
- Governance
- Working with new schools
- Consultancy
- Liaison and advice in the area of Higher Education

In his roles with leadership searches and governance workshops, as well as interaction with schools as a consultant, X plays a key role within school governance. His experience is wide and deep especially with international school governance structures and modes of operation.

Interview

The interview began with a discussion and agreement on five models of governance i.e. proprietary, elected, mixed, appointed and self perpetuating as being a basis for the discussion that would follow. However these models were then not discussed individually within the interview.

X began by outlining his view of governance and why governance can break down. *'Bad governance destroys companies and bad governance destroys schools'* he said. He then added that *'Good governance is a precondition for effective, sustainable schools.'* In addition he felt that there is no single model of governance that is a *'cookie cutter'* for every school. He knew of schools that worked effectively within a wide variety of models including corporate, appointed,

proprietary, and mission or faith based schools. The huge diversity in schools meant that he felt there were no single form of governance that could not work and no form which guaranteed success. He suggested that in his experience *‘Any model that clearly sets out roles, responsibilities and is adhered to will work well.’* In addition there must be a *‘moral, ethical commitment to separation of roles and responsibilities’*. More to the point, *‘No model will work if role and responsibility breaks down.’*

X felt that policy was crucial and it was when policy is ignored that break down of function occurs. He saw there being two reasons for a good policy framework, including the policy defined roles of governance and management or administration:

1. To protect the school – to ensure that all legal and fiscal requirements are met. These can also include aspects of curriculum, nationality of teachers as well as more common fiscal or administrative areas.
2. To provide instruction e.g. in definition of roles and responsibilities. These then become a source of consistency which in turn provides support, clear roles, protection and ultimately trust.

Then, drawing two schools as examples, he went on to back up his argument. One was a proprietary school owned and set up by a commercial company. Often such schools can be awkward as the attempt may be made to run the school as a business and to want control e.g. of the finances. In this case, based on CIS advice the company had set up a not-for-profit foundation with its own governing council which had also produced their own set of by-laws laying out roles and responsibilities. The Corporation could only interfere through its council representative by vetoing the budget and if the council was going to take an action against its own by-laws, the law of the land or that might adversely affect the reputation of the Corporation. The council was a mixture of self perpetuating and appointed members, those appointed being a minority of the council and appointed by the Corporation. There was a clear separation between council and

Corporation and this was defined and adhered to. In this case the governance was working fine and the school was developing along agreed lines.

The second school had a wholly elected parent board. The school had an average of a head every two years and the longest serving member of the board had been in place 18 months. For X this was a classic example of election leading to a change in policy leading to a change in strategy. In one year between April and July there had been a complete changeover within the board. This school was prone to elections taking into account ethnic backgrounds of those standing which led to a stand off between the international parents and those from the local community. The international community wanted good orientation and portability while the local community wanted better Year 12 results and greater continuity. This school exemplified the breakdown that can occur and that in X's opinion had a very detrimental effect on the school. In general he felt that the more elected parents, the worse the board operated.

X went on to say that in general he believed in and supported the concept of having representation on the board but that this should be balanced with members of the board who were there for their expertise. Therefore parent, staff and student representatives were to be encouraged but not in such numbers as to allow factions to arise. These should be balanced with experts selected without a sense of representation. It was important to have a majority of the board free of representation particularly when finances were being considered.

He felt that there were some key roles for the board; these were fiscal; ensuring that the school is in sound financial shape, strategic, budgets, policy, planning, appointment of the Head and creative; knowledge and expertise that could be called upon by the school. The only area where board members should get involved in the running of the school was when they were working within a creative area and being called upon for their expertise. Outside these roles the head of the school should be allowed to manage the school.

The interview finished with the observation that the link between good governance and school development was clear and both of these were linked to the longevity of board membership and the longevity of the head.

Interview 4 (Y)

Background

Y has had a distinguished career; firstly in national education within England and then in international education. Having been head of two schools in England Y then became the head of an international school. This was followed by 7 further years employed within international education. During his career Y has been involved with five boards to which he answered as well as being involved in 3 accreditation visits two of which he chaired. He has other relevant experience through his own work in advising on governance structure and consultancy work with schools following his retirement. He is an expert on international education and has authored a number of books.

Interview

The interview began with a discussion of the five models of governance although the discussion was mostly based on mixed and self perpetuating boards as these were the two that he had more experience with. The discussion started with a review of Y's direct experience in England and at international schools. In both cases the governance model was a mixture of appointed and elected. In the school he was Head of there were 5 appointed, 12 elected parents and 5 selected '*ad persona*' by the board to allow for necessary expertise to be appointed. The school in the UK was also a mixed board with most members appointed and a few elected. Y felt strongly that a level of representation was very important. '*I feel instinctively that councils should represent the school stake holders*'.

He also saw the key to success for boards as being a focus on 7-8 key issues which were.

1. Mission – set and support a long term plan
2. Fiscal – ensure financial integrity
3. Resources – ensure they are used wisely
4. Appoint and appraise the CEO/ Head
5. Support the head of the school
6. Management – set an overall structure that will achieve the mission
7. Programs – are in line with the Mission
8. Appeal – provide a mechanism for appeal

“A good board sticks to these issues and makes sure they are documented.”
‘Y.’ (2008) interview notes

We then moved to a discussion linking the models to the criteria. His response to the different models was that he had little sympathy with proprietary schools ‘*There is no democratic sense, no representation.*’ he said. Boards should have legitimacy and therefore represent the stakeholders. He added that this belief also meant that he did not see exclusively self-perpetuating boards as the best way of governing schools. Turning to elected and mixed or appointed boards he suggested that too many elected members were problematic as an ‘*Election brings its own agendas*’. His suggestion was that the best boards were mostly made up of appointed members or were based on a self-perpetuating system but with the addition of some representative members who were elected. ‘*I feel that largely appointed boards with a few elected members; parents, teachers and pupils is best. It stops board misbehaviour*’ was his comment. He also added that he felt it important not to have too many parents on the board as this could and did lead to a focus on the short term not on the objectives or mission.

He went on to identify two issues that affected elected board members and which all boards needed to be careful with. The first was that of status. Membership of the board could, and had in some situations that he was aware of, become a social status issue. Membership had been seen as a ‘*major social achievement*’. He felt that this should be avoided if possible and was a task for the board chair. The

second was that of turnover: he felt that the length of tenure of elected members should be quite long:

“Time on the board leads to improvement of the contribution the member can make. It takes 2-3 years to become knowledgeable and competent. High turnover leads to high levels of instability.”

‘Y.’ (2008) interview notes

It was important that all members of the board joined knowing that their length of service to the school was important.

His view was that the role of the head of the school, the link between head and chair and the longevity of the head and chair are all very important to the success of the board. In addition the way the board is perceived by the school is something that the board has to work on with the head:

“One measure of the competence of the head is how the governing body is perceived by the school.

The relationship between the head and the chair is crucial, enormously important.

Longevity of the head is crucial to the school. It aids board understanding, provides greater expertise and increases capacity.”

‘Y.’ (2008) interview notes

The same was true for the chair of the board where longevity allowed for a trusting relationship with the school, board and head to be built. In summary Y was an advocate for appointed boards that had made allowance for representation on the board for the major stake holders within the school community and in particular for staff, parents and students.

Y finished by suggesting that, whatever model of governance was employed, the mechanics of function could be nurtured and would result in a properly functioning board. The mechanics included

- Training of boards was essential and should include induction, self evaluation and external training on how boards could best function

- Ensuring that meetings were focused, timely and frequent
- Working on the perceptions of the board within the school community
- Having built sufficient trust to not panic when a crisis occurs – death, drugs, or staff relationship issues were all mentioned.

Interview 5 (Z)

Background

Z has worked at one school for most of his professional life. He started 34 years ago as a subject teacher and then moved to a succession of promoted posts that have included head of the high school and finished with the post of head of the school over twenty years ago. The school has grown during his time and is now an international school of approx 1300 students on seven different sites. The school is a proprietor owned school which then became a school with a board of share holders, with no additional representation. Such longevity in one school is unusual in international education, especially in owner-led schools and makes his experience valuable. In addition Z has extended his expertise by being part of over 20 accreditation visits and was chair of the board of an international education organisation. The school has always had an international outlook and hence was one of the early IB schools and is now doing all three of the IB curricula offerings. In addition the school owners have taken a long term view of the business and have not expected a dividend or similar.

Interview

Following discussion and agreement as to the general models of governance Z went on to comment.

“I believe that proprietary schools are difficult if they are run with a profit motive. There needs to be a very special person as the owner”.

‘Z.’ (2008) interview notes

However he felt that it was very difficult to generalise when it came to governance structures and effective leadership of schools. He drew on his experience to

mention different systems of governance when leadership had or had not been effective irrespective of the structure involved. In referring to a school with a self-perpetuating structure he mentioned that:

“School X had one Head for twenty years and since his retirement there has been huge turnover.”
‘Z.’ (2008) interview notes

When asked to comment on what he views as being the most difficult structure he had the following to say:

“I also view elected boards, be they elected parents or elected alumni, as being very difficult. A too democratic process leads to political agendas. I do believe that some level of representation is important but that boards should not be entirely representative. A parent representative and maybe one for the staff.”
‘Z.’ (2008) interview notes

He went on to comment about what he viewed as the most effective structure: a system with some representation but with a number of the board members not being representative or elected.

“I would suggest a mixed group with some degree of representation but not entirely ... it is important to have some members who are not representative ... this gives a better balance than a purely elected group”
‘Z.’ (2008) interview notes

When asked about what proportions would be most appropriate Z suggested that a majority of the board should not be representative of any particular group.

The interview then moved to the issue of board chair and head. Z, as a long term head, was a strong advocate for the benefits of low turnover and longevity in both of these posts. He suggested that it is in the school’s best interest to have long serving chairs and heads and could clearly see a link between turnovers in one post leading to an increase in the turnover in the other.

“Longevity is important and is psychological. Even a good relationship can have difficult patches. Tolerance and strategies for resolving issues are important.”

‘Z.’ (2008) interview notes

Throughout the interview the message was that there is no perfect system, although Z’s suggestion of a self perpetuating board with some representation from interested stake holders was, he felt, the best version. He sounded a note of caution. All systems were open to upset and none of them acted as a guarantee of stability and development. *“Never relax”* was his parting piece of advice for both heads and chairs.

Summary

The expert interviews show a general agreement although some held much stronger views than others. Two of the experts, V and W, were strongly of the belief that parent-elected boards should be avoided at all costs and were detrimental to the school, its functioning and, certainly, to school development or improvement. They were largely proponents of self perpetuating boards, perhaps with one or two members with some responsibilities to represent the views of staff or parents. Two other of the experts, X and Y, were more strongly of the view that the school community had to be represented within the board – though both were open to the idea that too many representatives, particularly if they were selected by open election, could lead to issues within the governance of the school.

It was felt that one responsibility of the management and head was to ‘manage’ the relationship between the leadership and the governance structures: that heads should be proactive in nurturing the relationship and ensuring that training and time for reflection as well as keeping an eye on the mission of the school were all kept at the forefront of the board’s thinking.

All of the experts felt that one of the major issues was the lack of training and structure for members of school boards. Many of those who got involved in governance were competent professionals but had no experience with governance and were tempted into taking action rather than maintaining an overview of the school. They all felt that “representation” was not what a board should be looking for but expertise, interest and commitment.

It is clear from both the expert interviews and from the questionnaire outcomes that Z’s advice of ‘*Never relax*’ is sound and should be taken to heart by all heads and chairs of international schools, especially those with parent elected or mixed boards.

This completes the collection of evidence for this enquiry. I will now go on to summarise the outcomes and to discuss their implications.

CHAPTER 5:DISCUSSION

This study set out to investigate how models of governance and school leadership in general impact on school improvement and development within the international school arena. Within the context of the specific research question of

- In what ways does the model of governance affect the stability of school leadership within international schools?

and subsidiary question

- In what ways does the model of governance and the stability of school leadership affect school development?

I would suggest that the short answer to the first question is *yes the model of governance does affect the leadership stability* and to the second is *not clear*.

The enquiry has taken me through four school studies, a questionnaire and five expert interviews. The data gathered was mostly qualitative and based on:

- interviewing senior administrators for the school studies;
- the questionnaire that arose from those studies; and
- interviewing experts in the field of international education and international school management for the final section.

Three methods of investigation were used as a way of broadening the scope of the enquiry and so the data could be triangulated.

The following section will summarise the data, discuss the implications of the enquiry and examine what conclusions can be reached.

Summary of Results

This enquiry has looked at the importance of the leadership in international schools, with a focus on the governance and administration interface. An attempt has been made to examine different models of governance and to analyse the impact of those models on the development and improvement of the school. Issues

were identified with governance in general, whatever model was used. All schools included in the school studies showed periods of governance/management conflict and all had terminated the contracts of senior staff as an outcome of that conflict.

School studies

The school studies showed that there is an interaction between heads and boards that can be crucial to the development of the school. This interaction can be positive or negative. Where a sense of partnership is engendered the mix of ideas and support for improvement of the school is most positive. The success of that partnership requires that a relationship of trust is built up between the head, the board and the chair of the board. The building of that trust required time, interaction and often training; the other feature, which assisted in the building of this relationship, was experience on the part of either head or chair. Conflict within the board or between board and school management had occurred within all four of the schools studied for the first part of the enquiry. This conflict was often personal and where not directly linked to the school or its progress, and was the result of a disagreement on an issue or personal antipathy.

The model of governance that functioned in each school showed that no model is perfect, and that all of the schools had experienced times of turmoil over the last twenty years as the result of a breakdown of communication between the governors and the management of the school. It was clear that when this happened the school would continue to function, but that the ethos or prevailing culture of the school, and particularly the sense of trust and optimism that the teaching staff had in the school, was affected. Interestingly none of the administrators interviewed in the school studies articulated academic optimism, trust, or confidence as issues but rather focused on a more concrete sense of school development. All those interviewed were senior administrators and it may be that an enquiry based on the perceptions of teachers would have produced quite a different picture of what was held to be important within the framework of school development. This might be an interesting project for further research.

The school studies identified two broad areas that were investigated further in the questionnaire and expert interviews. The first was the suggested relationship between the model of governance and the turnover of senior staff, most particularly the head. In the school studies it was clear that the schools with the highest number of current parents on the board, School A and School C, were the ones that had the highest rate of senior administrator turnover. In the case of School A, where the governance model required all governors to be current parents the turnover of the head seemed to have become an established part of the school's culture. In School C the governance model was changed, as a result of board / head conflict, to reduce both the size of the board and the number of current parents, on the board.

The second broad area to be investigated further was the strong suggestion that there was a link between the governance model, the turnover of the head and school development; a number of indicators for development were suggested. These included financial stability, investment in curricula change and infrastructure, staff turnover, morale and professional development and examination results. The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of this input.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire attempted to explore in more detail the areas identified within the school studies. It was constructed on the basis of the interviews conducted as part of the school studies. The questionnaire examined the two broad areas of governance/leadership and school development.

The return on the questionnaire was low and the results of limited generalisability. It was not possible to show any relationship between model of governance, turnover of head or turnover of board chair and any of the markers of school development identified during the school studies. This does not mean that these links do not exist but they were not shown in this study. If this study was to be

repeated then the inclusion of teachers as respondents to the questionnaire and the addition of a section on academic optimism/ school culture could be interesting.

The questionnaire did show that there was a distinct difference in the length of service of heads across schools with different models of governance. The clearest result was that those schools with a high number of parents on the board, i.e. either parent elected boards or mixed boards, had double the rate of turnover of both heads and chairs when compared to schools with other models.

Expert Interviews

The evidence gathered here was the clearest of that arising from the three methods. There was agreement from the five people interviewed that elected boards, particularly those that were elected from current students' parents, were the least stable. Two of the experts were unequivocal in their condemnation of parent elected boards.

All experts agreed that the interface between school leadership and governance was crucial to the health of the school and that it was the responsibility of the leadership, and particularly the head, to manage that interface.

In addition the role of training for both leadership and governance was seen as an important aspect of school development.

Discussion

The link between governance, the school and, in particular, the school head is generally held to be crucial to the possibility of development and improvement. However it needs to be established whether such a link is important to the school and to the achievement of its students. The literature does indeed suggest that there is a link between school leadership and student achievement. However, the question of how the governance and head of a school influence the student

outcomes needs to be examined critically if the corollary that frequent turnover of the head of a school is bad for schools, the development of schools and the student outcomes is to be sustained.

The first question to ask is; does education make a difference? The post-modern thought that all is relative allied with Bourdieu's suggestion (Robbins 2006) that the education system is part of the process of maintaining the children of the middle classes in the middle class may suggest education lacks the capacity to be a force for change. However the practising educator, particularly in the developing world, would be able to point to many cases where education has indeed transformed the lives of students. There is also increasingly good evidence to suggest that schools can and do make a difference. In addition, the rhetoric surrounding the proposed 'knowledge society' would certainly suggest that there is empirical value for all in being educated and in developing the habit of learning. Some would suggest that the importance of education to society has been well established in terms of educational outcomes and the link between education and employment. It has been said that education is one of only a few transforming forces in human society. More recently the understanding of education has been broadened to include the impact of learning on society and the role of education in *life long learning*. The link from education to learning and then to life outcomes has become well established, at least in political circles, over the last decade. In a review of the area, Bynner and Feinstein have concluded that the impact and importance of learning on student life outcomes is enormous:

"Much educational policy in the past was directed at improving the curriculum and its immediate outcomes in terms of learning gains and qualifications. The longer term consequences of the education process through schooling and what follows in the form of 'lifelong learning' has moved only relatively recently to centre stage....

The economic returns linking earnings to learning are a clear private benefit to the extent that the individual's wage may be enhanced by the education they gain. But they also have a 'public good' status in the sense that education is believed to enhance productivity and employability of the individual employee and consequently competitiveness for firms and the

economy as a whole. Thus the benefits to the individual also bring economic benefits to society through increased production, economic growth and tax revenues. ...

There are also, perhaps, even more important public and private aspects to the non-economic benefits of learning beyond the productivity effects. To the extent that education enhances an individual's quality of life this may reflect a wider private benefit but there may also be important social benefits through improved health, for example, that may bring reduced health service costs as well as benefits for families and other social networks. Learning as a shared activity, cutting across class and ethnic boundaries, is also likely to enhance tolerance and mutual understanding and to stimulate social and political participation. Hence another public benefit of learning lies in its contribution to social capital and the strengthening of social cohesion."

Bynner and Feinstein (2005, p 178)

If it is accepted that student learning is one of the major outcomes of school education and that the capacity to continue to learn is also inherent in us all then the role of the teacher, the classroom and the leadership of the school is clearly of importance. This is true for the school leaders, particularly, in creating an atmosphere or ethos that allows students to learn most effectively. The school, the teacher and the members of the school community as a learning community have all been shown to have an impact on the learning that takes place within schools. This work is supported by a number of authors who suggest that optimism, trust and other such descriptions of the ethos within a school all assist in supporting the student's learning.

What could be accepted within this discussion is that the experience that students have within the family and at school is, for most of them, a significant part of their formation as people and has an important influence on how they live their lives. Therefore the proposition that school, education and learning are important can be accepted and built on.

It can also be inferred, from the literature, that one school can be better than another in facilitating this learning; that one classroom can be better than another. Therefore the whole area of school improvement and effectiveness can, on this

evidence, be taken to have a foundation that is important to student learning and student outcomes. If this is accepted, then the idea that international schools can have an additional effect on student learning can also be considered, i.e. that international education and international schools must, as part of the values base upon which many of them are founded, include issues of international-mindedness and intercultural awareness. If, as is suggested, students will leave international schools not only with qualifications and experience which will aid them through life but also with a greater understanding of others and respect for the differences amongst humans, then the importance of the experience is clear.

If the argument is accepted that education and learning, particularly the habit of learning, are important and that international schools may have the capacity to add a particularly interesting and important facet to that education, then the role of the international school and its community becomes of value. It is suggested here that heads of schools and board members as well as the model of governance have an impact on school culture and school leadership. It is further argued that both of these have an impact on student outcomes.

The literature review raised the issue of international schools being different from or having a different ethos to those of national systems. For example, does the issue of international mindedness mean that the role of leadership within the school is different from national systems and the impact of leadership on the school is diminished compared to national schools? Or, does the setting of the international schools studied suggest that turnover of heads is not going to impact on school development? The findings of the enquiry would suggest the opposite, that leadership and stability of leadership are more important in international schools than national systems. The school studies, the questionnaire and the expert interviews support the sense that international schools are, if different to national schools, more dependent on the leadership of the governance and head for their development and chances of improvement. The sense of isolation or separation from national roots or support would suggest the possibility that

international schools need a greater sense of stability and continuity if they are to become 'improving' schools.

So far research has not made sufficient link between these factors of leadership, distribution of leadership and stability to be predictive or discriminating as to which factor is the more influential under which conditions. As Quinn outlines:

"The importance of the principal's role as an instructional leader and the direct relationship on changing instructional practice to improve student performance has been researched extensively. ... Foriska described instructional leadership as critical to the development and maintenance of an effective school. Instructional leaders must influence others to pair appropriate instructional practices with their best knowledge of the subject matter. The focus must always be on student Active Teaching and principal must supply teachers with resources and incentives to keep their focus students.... Andrews and Soder describe the effective instructional leader as a principal performing at high level in four areas – resource provider, instructional resource, communicator and visible presence in the school."
Quinn (2002, p 447)

The notion of leadership and how it impacts on learning is one of increasing importance, although there continues to be debate as to how strong the link is and how direct is the influence on student learning of a head of school or board. Overall there would appear to be a link, but one that is mediated through other factors, in particular the teacher in the classroom. Does this then suggest that longevity of heads is important? Does it take time for the school culture to properly reflect the focus that the head would like to bring to the school and to student learning? Giles and Hargreaves argue that innovative schools inevitably lose the sense of growth and development through change of personnel:

"Changing leadership, the gradual loss and replacement of key faculty, changes in the size or composition of the student body, and shifts in policy or the district's attention to other priorities amount to an "attrition of change" that leads to the school's seemingly inevitable decline."
Giles and Hargreaves (2006, p 125)

If this is true, then the head of the school must be accepted as one of the 'key *faculty*' and regular changes of head as a barrier to the development of an improving, supportive and developing school. In addition, the role of the head and the governance of the school become important in facilitating the circumstances in which the development of the student is the focus of the school. The results of this study show that in those international schools included in the study there is a high turnover of heads and board members including chairs. This study suggests that this high turnover is a hindrance to the development or improvement of the school and detracts from student achievement.

The emotional appeal to a current international school head of claiming this to be a crucial factor is strong. Is such a position supported elsewhere? To what extent has this premise been supported by the literature? The literature search upon which this project is based suggests that both head and governance plays a role. In particular the work on academic optimism and trust within a distributed leadership model would suggest that continuity is crucial to schools and to the development of schools.

How does this mesh with the findings of the research within this thesis? The school studies show evidence that the interface between head and board is important to the functioning of the school. This was particularly seen in School A, which had the highest rate of changeover of both head of school and chair of board. Here the rate of staff turnover had also been very significant and the opportunity to develop aspects of distributed leadership or Hoy's concept of "*academic optimism*" (2006) would seem to be limited by the rate of change brought in leadership. The rate of turnover, the sense of change that this engenders and the response from teaching staff to focus on their own tasks and to examine change and development with a critical eye could all be identified among the issues engendered by this turnover.

The school study results also support the notion that a majority of current parents on a board is likely to lead to political positioning and to high turnover of both chair

of the board and head of the school. However, the results of this study do not make a link between this turnover and student learning or other student outcomes such as examination results. The school with the largest number of current parents on the board, School 'A', had the highest leadership turnover, and School 'C' - which had moved from nearly all current parents on the board to having only one parent as a board member - are both cases which show evidence of the governance/leadership-generated turmoil but no evidence of this turmoil impacting on the students within the schools. Evidence from the expert interviews and the questionnaire would also support the view that too many parents on a board, particularly if they are elected, is not a good thing for continuity within the school.

A sense of clarity on this issue is important. The literature review supported the position that the leadership of the school and in particular the leadership provided by the head of the school is important to the school, to school development, to school improvement and to student achievement. As Harris et al puts it.

Whatever else is disputed about this complex area of activity, the centrality of leadership in the achievement of school effectiveness and school improvement remains undisputed."
Harris, Day and Hadfield (2003)

This study set out to look at this area in relation to governance models and the stability of school leadership within international schools. The school studies and the expert interviews provide strong support for the proposition that leadership is as important within international schools as it is in national systems. The study also shows that international schools in general are not good at providing for a sense of continuity within leadership at either the head or the governance level. High turnover in leadership also means that the impact of the leadership is diminished as it takes time to build the necessary confidence and social capital required by effective leaders. This stance was supported in this study by the school studies and the expert interviews. In particular, those interviewed as experts in governance all saw the longevity of the head of a school and the chair of the board, together with the chance to build a culture of improvement, as being important to the school.

and supported by the length of service of both chair of the board and head of school.

The literature supporting the role of governance within school leadership and the impact it might have on a school is less clear-cut than that which pertaining to heads of school. However, the evidence that can be found in literature supports the premise that good governance is a prerequisite for improving schools and that this is at least as important in international schools.

If the school is to have a sense of continuity despite external changes, strategic or long-term planning must come to terms with its values and its guiding philosophy. It must understand the meaning it has given the school when it has given itself the name 'international'."
Wilkinson (2002, p186)

The findings of this study, although providing more data on heads than governors do seem to suggest that the length of service of board members and, in particular, the chair of the board is affected by the model of governance and by the number of parents of current students on the board. The introduction of politics into the board is probably inevitable but the election process of some boards can make it an overpowering force.

This study strongly suggests that the presence of parents of current students and, in particular, elected parents of current students on a school governing body can provide circumstances which would make the governing body and the tenure of the senior leadership of the school more fragile.

An example of this phenomenon is an international school that I visited as a member of a CIS accreditation team. The school visited had a seven-person board, all current parents of the school. Over the 30 year history of the school there had been frequent turnover of heads. The school had excellent facilities and gained good results in the IB Diploma examinations. What was clear to the visiting

team, however, was that the classroom was typified by being teacher-centred and the learning was teacher-led. In the final report, the classroom was described as being “*arid*”. One example does not make a case. However, it does serve to illustrate the areas in which high turnover may have an impact.

It is being suggested here that short term heads and high turnover have an impact on teacher perceptions and school organizational culture. This turnover could be an obstacle to the development of teachers, school culture and student outcomes as well as having a negative impact on the financial, recruitment and management needs of the school.

Therefore the impact on the school of both governance structure and head tenure becomes even more important. This suggestion, although satisfying in its implication of education having an impact on student outcomes, and being appealing to the educator as providing a mechanism for such an impact, is far from being conclusive and there would need to be much more work done before it could be established with any sense of certainty. As Land says:

Several reviews of studies of site-based management have been conducted, and a compelling link between site-based management and students' academic achievement has not been found.

Land 2002 (p241)

An interesting avenue for further research would be to test in greater detail the concept of academic optimism and variation in the level of optimism: to compare teaching practice within international schools with a more stable management history compared to staff from schools that have experienced high turnover of head, as well as interviewing teaching staff in both types of school. Such a study would provide an interesting examination of the impact of leadership turnover on quality of teaching and student outcomes.

I now turn to the issue of politics and school boards. Having substantial numbers of parents of current students serving on a school board, particularly when they are elected board members, would appear to lead to a greater sense of politics and of representation of a particular group view. If there is one proposal emerging consistently within this study it is that international schools should not have too many current parents on the board. There was extremely strong feeling on this point from two of the experts interviewed, although there was also support, from two other experts, for the stance that the community should be involved in governance and that the governing body should have some form of representation including from parents, staff and other community groups. There was also a clear understanding from all of those interviewed, experts and senior administrators alike, that if politics entered governance then the school and students are the ones likely to bear the cost. One example given here was of a parent standing on the platform of “no fee increase, if elected”. Such an undertaking obviously could not be based on a full understanding of the school and its needs and would certainly be at odds with the incumbent governance structure.

One disappointing aspect of this enquiry was the outcomes of the questionnaire. The return was low and it failed to show a link between markers for school development and either board or head turnover. What the questionnaire outcomes did establish was clear correlation between the number of current parents on the board and the rate of turnover of the head and chair. This would seem to support the suggestion that too many parents on the board can increase the degree of politics within the board. It is not clear if this is a causal link but the suspicion must be that it is a contributory factor.

The questionnaire also looked at the issue of appraisal of heads but did not consider whether the board appraised its own performance. If this study, or aspects of it, were to be repeated then to include some data-gathering on board appraisal and training would be of value. In this case there did not seem to be a link between the presence of an appraisal system and either the longevity of the

head or the performance of the school. However the area could certainly benefit from further and more in-depth study. In particular the experts suggested that boards would benefit from appraising their own performance against a pre-agreed set of objectives. Such a system could also be the basis of regular board training. The advice from Hodgson (2005, p7-8) is to have both. This position is supported by Keil and Nicholson (2005), who suggest that the benefit from a board evaluating itself is that the process allows for the development of a shared vision and set of values, whatever the outcome of the evaluation:

“Boards also need to recognise that the evaluation process is an effective team-building, ethics-shaping activity. Our observation is that boards often neglect the process of engagement when undertaking evaluations; unfortunately, boards that fail to engage their members are missing a major opportunity for developing a shared set of board norms and inculcating a positive board and organization culture. In short, the process is as important as the content. In conclusion, implementing a robust and successful board and director evaluation is one important way to ensure that a board can avert governance failure and consequent organisational failure.”

Keil and Nicholson (2005, p 630)

If self evaluation and training were a regular part of board practice, then a greater sense of understanding of schools, school operation and the role of the board *vis a vis* that of the head could more easily be established. It is important that the head and the board are united in purpose and vision, and that both understand which leadership role belongs to whom. If such clarity can be achieved, whatever the model of governance being employed, then it is likely the confusion and tension can be reduced. As McCormick et al point out, the leadership role of the board can be confused and any steps taken to reduce that confusion would be productive for the school:

“In the case of school boards, leadership arises in a context different from that traditionally considered in the literature, in that leadership may not be constrained to one leader because all school board members have significant responsibility for leadership. In practice, this may mean that leadership may be performed singularly by the Board Chair and collectively by the School Board. Clearly, the group-based structure of a school board means that

leadership is more complicated as leadership roles are shared and the lines of authority and decision making become blurred.”
McCormick et al (2006, p 434)

Although it has proved difficult to draw any direct link between governance model and school development, what has become clear through this enquiry has been a relationship between governance, the governance model and the leadership of the school. The additional leadership issues, identified in the literature and through the national school systems, of turnover, trust, time and the opportunity to build an ethos would all appear to apply to an international school setting. The particular features sometimes associated with international schools, including cultural dissonance, intercultural awareness and isolation all add to the difficulties for leaders of generating an ethos and a culture of improvement or development. Such difficulties would appear to be made more difficult within the context of some governance models, particularly those dominated by parents of students who are attending the school.

The literature supporting this study suggests that leadership within international schools is fraught with difficulties that lead to ‘short termism’ of view from governance and heads. As Hayden points out -

“a lack of any expectation of long-term security, job-wise, would seem to be one of the characteristics of the international school head.”
Hayden (2006, p105)

Given the crucial role that leadership has been shown to have in any school and in particular in schools that are pushing towards improvement, the short term approach taken by schools, governors, chairs and heads cannot be supportive of the individual international school or the development of international schools in general. Hawley’s average tenure for international school heads of 2.8 years and the findings of the enquiry upon which this thesis is based - would place the length of service under some governance models as being between 3 and 4 years - do not sit comfortably with Littleford’s suggestion that heads are at their most effective and have the greatest impact after 8-10 years. This raises issues that need to be

addressed not only by the individual international school leadership, but also possibly by organisations that represent international schooling on a wider level.

This study was based on a literature review that suggested five models of international school governance. These were Proprietary, Self-perpetuating, Elected, Appointed and Combination or Mixed. This set of models worked well within the brief of this study. During the course of the study it was found that all the schools considered by either the questionnaire or the school studies could fit their governance structure within these models. The enquiry an unexpected finding that showed a longer length of service of heads working in proprietary schools compared to other governance models. Although informal, one of the expert interviewees who had worked in a proprietary school for many years suggested that length of service in such schools was either very short or long. "Once your face fitted, you were OK" was the comment. Having said that the same interviewee also said that the best advice to heads as far as governors were concerned is "to never relax". One other interesting factor is that those schools that had Mixed or Appointed boards often had parents of current students appointed to fill the appointed posts. Some international schools have external bodies who appoint some members of the board. E.g. company heads, ambassadors or delegation heads. If an ambassador or head of a UN post was looking for someone to fill a school board appointed post they would usually look for someone within their organisation who had a child attending the school – unwittingly contributing to a less stable governance model.

In summary the literature review that laid the foundation of this research and the data gathered from it would suggest that there are some models of governance within international schools that are more stable than others, and that lend themselves to a greater length of service from the chair of the board and the head of the school. The literature would suggest that greater length of service will increase the chances of the school becoming an improving one.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study examined the following question:

- In what ways does the model of governance affect the stability of school leadership within international schools?

and subsidiary question

- In what ways does the model of governance and the stability of school leadership affect school development?

This enquiry took the form of a case study and such studies are always indicative rather than predictive due to the imperfect nature of the evidence provided. Case studies serve to provide complex knowledge and understanding within complex situations. As Stout suggested -

Schools are an extreme form of social organisation where the stakes for success and failure are high.
Stout (2005 p 39)

Within this context I saw a case study as being a good method for examining the complex nature of international schools and seeking a greater understanding of how they operate. As Stake outlines -

Quantitative researchers have pressed for explanation and control: qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists.
Stake (1995, p 37)

The primary question has, therefore, been partly answered by this study and illuminated with sufficient evidence to suggest some concrete findings and to indicate effective directions for future research.

Using studies of four international schools as a basis for this enquiry, I was able to examine in some depth the governance structure of these schools and to

draws some conclusions which gave direction to the remainder of the enquiry. The school studies showed that no governance model is perfect. In fact all four schools had occasions when the line between governance and management was crossed. Although there was no clear cut conclusion that could be drawn, the school studies did show some evidence, particularly from Schools A and C, that there was a -

“Relationship between the model of governance and the turnover of senior staff”

(see p117 of this thesis)

This relationship seemed to establish a link between the degree of politics associated with board membership and the stability of the leadership. If there were many parents of current students on the board and in particular if those parents were elected to the board then the governance and stability of leadership appeared more fragile.

Given that the literature review showed the importance of leadership within international schools and that this leadership needed to be distributed across the head, the governors and the staff of the school, I felt that further investigation within this context would be valuable. Using this direction as a basis for the structure and form of the questionnaire and for the structure of the five expert interviews, I was able to be more focussed within the remainder of the research.

As mentioned within the earlier discussion, the data provided by the questionnaire was interesting and indicative but disappointing, in that the returns were at such a low level that the information acquired could not provide a real base for conclusions to be made. However the questionnaire did show a clear link between the model of governance used within any particular school and the length of service of both the head of the school and the chair of the board. With the exception of the length of service issue, however, the questionnaire failed to show any link between model of governance and school development. This outcome was interesting in that the link between governance, governance model and leadership

stability was established more clearly. The overall findings also provided valuable direction for the five expert interviews.

The expert interviews also provided some of the clearest evidence that there is a link between governance model and school leadership, and that there are some models that provide greater security, are less open to political influence and are more likely to provide the conditions, as described within the literature, to allow the school to become an improving school. Such interviews are indicative but do not provide evidence that is predictive. However as one interviewee, a past head of international schools, put it: he would never again work for a school with a governing body elected from the parents.

Overall this study has shown that the link between governance model and school leadership is important and can influence to provide the school and its students with the conditions needed to favour students increased achievement.

The world of international schools is one that continues to see huge growth. This growth would seem to be driven by a number of factors including an increase in the number of global employees, a growing appreciation of the benefits of international aspects within education, a desire for an English language-based education, appreciation of the quality of the International Baccalaureate and other international curriculum programmes, and greater investment in international education. This led to a growth in the number of schools and the foundations from which they come. This growth resulted in a very diverse set of governance structures and the outcomes of this study have shown that such diversity can lead to particular issues facing school leadership both at board and at head level. In some cases this leads to higher head turnover, a fracturing of the leadership continuum and may result in a drop in the quality being offered to the students. It would appear that in all international schools, whatever the governance model, rate of turnover is going to be important.

Clear definition of particular roles in relation to leadership and training for leadership would not appear to be present in many international schools. One contributory factor here is the high rate of turnover amongst the school leadership and particularly in the boards. As James et al suggest in an article pertaining to national system schools in the US, explicit leadership was a benefit to the schools studied. It would appear that this could also benefit international schools, although the rate of turnover commonly found in international schools would make such a sense of leadership more difficult to attain:

“systemic leadership for all schools could, and perhaps should, be more explicit. The schools we studied appeared to benefit from strong mutual systemic leadership and we would argue that all schools would gain similarly.... There is thus a case for more ‘leadership for schools’ from the system to enhance the authorization of the leadership of schools, which was widely present within the schools we studied.”
James et al. (2007, p584)

The results of the study undertaken by James et al would suggest that there is a broad similarity between national system school governance and that to be found in international schools, perhaps particularly so, in the case of independent national schools and international schools. However, it is also clear that the international school system has to cope with some particular issues. The school studies, the expert interviews and the questionnaire used to gather data within this thesis all highlight that in international schools there is generally a greater degree of turnover within boards, of board chairs and of school heads than is found in other contexts. This turnover would appear to be linked to those boards with a high number of elected parents. Given the high rate of head turnover, there is also a difficulty in maintaining good practice with relation to board training and board evaluation.

Literature, based on national school studies, which suggests that consistency of leadership, a shared vision and time to build on practice are all conditions that

allow schools to improve. If these suggestions also apply to international schools then the high turnover of heads, board chairs and boards will all have an impact on what the school and the students might achieve.

A number of interesting avenues for future research have been opened in this study. It is hoped that the outcomes of the study will thus not only contribute to the relatively limited body of research that currently exists on international schools and their leadership and governance, but will also act as a stimulus to further research by others in this fast-growing field.

REFLECTION

My first sense is that working full time and doing tertiary level study is very demanding. My second feeling is how worthwhile it has been. I realise now that the depth of knowledge acquired, the habits formed and the reflection that I have been forced to undertake by the demands of this course have changed me. They have changed me as a person, certainly, but also as a professional educator and head of international schools. The most fundamental change has been in my professional practice. It has always been easy to say focus on the important not the urgent - now I have a better idea as to what the important is. More of my time is spent with the teachers and the students and less in the office. More of my time is spent with pedagogy and less with administration.

When I began this course I had visions of a quick four or five year process. Ten years, three jobs, three continents and another child later I realise how naive I was. However, I also realise that I am glad for the time and the discipline, for the hard work and the thoughtful process. The grandiose ideas of solving the world's problems have been replaced with an appreciation of the value of perseverance and of knowledge: of how small changes in practice can lead to big changes in atmosphere within a school.

References

- AERA, APA, & NCME (1999). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC : AERA. (p. 17).
- Allan, M (2002). Cultural Borderlands. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 1, no1, pp 63-90.
- Alsbury, T. (2003) Superintendent and School Board Member Turnover: Political versus Apolitical Turnover as a Critical Variable in the Application of Dissatisfaction Theory. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 39, no 5, p667-698
- Alsbury, T. (2004) Does school board turnover matter? Revisiting critical variables in the Dissatisfaction Theory of American democracy. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. 7, no 4, p357-377
- Amsterdam, C. E., Johnson, R.L., Monrad, D.M. and Tonnsen, S.L. (2005) A Collaborative Approach to the Development and Validation of a Principal Evaluation System: A Case Study. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 17, no3, pp221-242.
- Anderson. G. and Arsenault, N. (1998). *Fundamentals of Educational Research*. Falmer Press, London
- Antonio, D.M. and Gamage, D.T. (2007) Building trust among educational stakeholders through Participatory School Administration, Leadership and Management. *Management in Education* 21, no1, pp15-22
- Arrowsmith, T. (2007) Distributed leadership in secondary schools in England: the impact of the role of the headteacher and other issues. *Management in Education* 21, no2, pp21-27
- Alsbury, T.L. (2004). Does school board turnover matter? *International Journal in Education*, 7, no 4, pp 357-377.
- Baker, D.B. and Cooper, B.S. (2005) Do Principals with Stronger Academic Backgrounds Hire Better Teachers? Policy Implications for Improving High-Poverty Schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 41, no3, pp449-479
- Barnett, K and McCormick, J. (2004) Leadership and Individual Principal-Teacher Relationships in Schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 40, no3, pp406-434
- Bell, J. (2005) *Doing your Research Project*. Open University Press, Maidenhead
- Best, J.W. and Kahn, J.V. (1998). *Research in Education*. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.

Bickel, W. E. (1983). Effective Schools: Knowledge, Dissemination, Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, April, pp 3-5.

Bogler, R. (2001) The Influence of Leadership Style on Teacher Job Satisfaction. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 37, no5, pp 662-683

Bolivar, A and Moreno, J.M. (2006) Between transaction and transformation; The role of school principals as education leaders in Spain. *Journal of Educational Change* 7, pp19-31

Borman, G.D., Hewes, G.M., Overman, L.T. and Brown, S. (2003) Comprehensive School Reform and Achievement: A Meta- Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 73, (2), pp125-230.

British Educational Research Association (2009) <http://www.bera.ac.uk/data-collection-interviews-in-research/>

British Educational Research Association (2009) Ethics and Educational Research: The researchers responsibilities, <http://www.bera.ac.uk/ethics-and-educational-research-2/researchers-responsibilities/>

British International School web site, <http://www.bisc.edu.eg/nschool/gov.php> (2008)

Bryman, A. (2006) Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done? *Qualitative Research*, 6, (1), pp97-113

Bubb, S., Earley, P., Ahtaridou, E., Jones, J. and Taylor, C. (2007) The self-evaluation form: is the SEF aiding school improvement? *Management in Education* 21, n03, pp32-37

Busher, H and Barker, B. (2003) The Crux of Leadership. *Educational Management & Administration* 31, no1, pp51-65

Byrne, G. and Gallagher, T. (2004). Systemic factors in school improvement. *Research Papers in Education*, 19, (2) pp 161-183.

Bynner, J. and Feinstein, L. (2005) What can policy learn from the research on the wider benefits of learning? *London Review of Education*, 3. (3) pp177-190

Caldwell, B.J. (2004) A strategic view of efforts to lead the transformation of schools. *School Leadership & Management* 24, no1, pp 81-99.

Cavanagh, R.F. and Waugh, R.F. (2004) Secondary School Renewal: The Effect of Classroom Learning Culture on Educational Outcomes. *Learning Environments Research*. 7, pp 245-269

Chapman, C. Leadership for Improvement in Urban and Challenging Contexts *London Review of Education* 2, no2, pp95-108

Chapman, C. and Harris, A. (2004) Improving schools in difficult and challenging contexts: strategies for improvement. *Educational Research*, 46. (3), pp 219-228.

Charles, C.M. (1988) *Introduction to Educational Research*. Longman, USA

Council of International Schools; (2005) *Governance in International Schools*, Peridot Press, Suffolk. Hodgson, A. and Chuck M. eds

Codrington, S. (2004) Applying the concept of 'best practice' to international schools. *Journal of Research in International Education*. 3, (2), pp 173-188

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000) *Research Methods in Education*. RoutledgeFalmer, London

Coleman, J.S., Campell, E.Q., Hobson, C.J., McPartland, J., Mood, A.M., Winfield, F.D. and York, R.L. (1966) Equality of educational opportunity. Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Coleman, J.S (1968) Equality of educational opportunity *Equity and Excellence in Education* 6, no3, pp19-28

Collison, V. (2008) Leading by learning: new directions in the twenty-first century. *Journal of Educational Administration* 46, no4, pp443-460

Copeland, M.A. (2003) Leadership of Inquiry: Building and Sustaining Capacity for School Improvement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 25, (4), pp 375-395.

Cornforth, C and Edwards, C. (1999) Board Roles in the Strategic Management of Non-profit Organisations: theory and practice. *Corporate Governance* 7, no 4, pp 346-362

Cornforth, C. (2001) What makes Boards Effective? An examination of the relationships between board inputs, structures, processes and effectiveness in non-profit organisations. *Corporate Governance* 9, no 3, pp 217-227.

Creemers, B.P.M. and Reezigt, G.J. (2005) Linking School Effectiveness and School Improvement: The background and outline of the project. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*. 16, (4), pp 359-371

Creemers, B.P.M., (2002) From School Effectiveness and School Improvement to Effective School Improvement: Background, Theoretical Analysis, and Outline of the Empirical Study. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 8, no4, pp343-362

Crowther, F. (2002) Big Change Question, Is the Role of the Principal in Creating School Improvement Over-rated? *Journal of Educational Change* 3, pp167-173

Crum, K.S. and Sherman, W.H. (2008) Facilitating high achievement; High school principal's reflections on their successful leadership practices. *Journal of Educational Administration* 46, no5, pp562-580.

Cullingford, C., and Swift, H., Beleaguered by Information? The reactions of headteachers to school effectiveness initiatives. *Educational Review*, 53, no3, pp271-283

Davies, B.J. and Davies, B. (2006) Developing a Model for Strategic Leadership in Schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 34, no1, pp121-139

Day, C. (2005) Principals who sustain success: Making a difference in schools in challenging circumstances. *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 8, no4, pp273-290

Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L., Kippen, S. and Liamputtong, P. (2007) Doing sensitive research: what challenges do qualitative researchers face? *Qualitative Research*, 7, (3) pp327-353

Dimmock, C. and Walker, (2004) A new approach to strategic leadership; learning-centredness, connectivity and cultural context in school design. *School Leadership & Management*. 24, no1, pp39-56

Dioguardi (2009) <http://www.geocities.com/criticalrationalist/#definition>

Dorussen, H., Lenz, H. and Blavoukos, S. (2005) Assessing the Reliability of Expert Interviews. *European Union Politics*, 6, (3) pp315-337

Earley, P. (2000) Monitoring, Managing or Meddling? Governing Bodies and the Evaluation of School Performance. *Educational Management & Administration* 28, no 2, pp 199-210.

Earley, P. (2003) Leaders of Followers? Governing Bodies and their Role in School Leadership. *Educational Management & Administration* 31, no 4, pp 353-367

Earley, P. and Weindling, D. (2007) Do School Leaders Have a Shelf Life? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 35, no1, pp73-88

Easley, J (2006) Alternative route urban teacher retention and implications for principals' moral leadership. *Educational Studies* 32, no3, pp241-249

Farahbakhsh, S (2007) Managerial effectiveness in educational administration: concepts and perspectives. *Management in Education* 21, no2, pp33-36

Fielding, M. (1997) Beyond school effectiveness and school improvement: lighting the slow fuse of possibility. *The Curriculum Journal*, 8, no1, pp7-27

Fink, D. and Brayman, C. (2006) School Leadership Succession and the Challenges of Change. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 42, no1, pp62-89

Flick, U., (2006) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, SAGE London

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006) Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12, (2), pp219-245

Foster, R., (2004) Leadership and secondary school improvement: case studies of tension and possibilities. *International Journal in Education*.8, no1, pp35-52

Fredricks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C, and Paris, A. H. (2004) School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74, no1, pp59-109

Fullan, M. (2002) The Role of Leadership in the Promotion of Knowledge Management in Schools *Teachers and Teaching; theory and practice* 8, no3/4, pp 409-419

Giles, C. and Hargreaves, A. (2006) The Sustainability of Innovative Schools as Learning Organisations and Professional Learning Communities During Standardized Reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*.42, (1), pp 124-156

Gold, A., Evans, J., Earley, P., Halpin, D and Collarbone, P. (2003) Principled Principals? *Educational Management & Administration* 31, no2, pp127-138

Gordon, J. and Patterson, J.A. (2006) School leadership in context: Narratives of practice and possibility. *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 9, no3, pp205-228

Griffith, J (1999) The School Leadership/School Climate Relation: Identification of School Configurations Associated with Change in Principals. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 35, no2, pp267-291

Grubb, N and Flessa, J.J. (2006) A Job Too Big for One”: Multiple Principals and Other Nontraditional Approaches to School Leadership. *Educational Administration & Leadership* 42, no4, pp 518-550

Guarino, C.M., Santibanez, L. and Daley, G. (2006) Teacher Recruitment and Retention: Review of the Recent Empirical Literature *Review of Educational Research*, 76, No. 2, pp. 173–208

Gunasekara, C. (2007) Pivoting the centre: reflections on undertaking qualitative interviewing in academia. *Qualitative Research*, 7, (4), pp46-473

Gunraj, J. and Rutherford, D. (1999) Preliminary Evaluation of the HEADPAMP Programme for New Headteachers. *Educational Management Administration Leadership* 27, no2, pp143-154

- Hallinger, P. and Murphy, J. F. (1986) The Social Context of Effective Schools. *American Journal of Education*.94, (3) pp 328-355
- Hargreaves, A. (2007) Sustainable Leadership and Development in Education: creating the future, conserving the past. *European Journal of Education* 42, no2, pp223-233
- Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. (2006) Educational Change Over Time? The Sustainability and Nonsustainability of Three Decades of Secondary School Change and Continuity. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 42, no1, pp3-41
- Hargreaves, D.H. (2001) A Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement. *British Educational Research Journal*, 27, no4, pp487-503
- Harris, A. (2001) Department Improvement and School Improvement: a missing link? *British Educational Research Journal*, 27, no4, pp473-486
- Harris, A. (2004a) Distributed Leadership and School Improvement. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 32, no1, pp11-24
- Harris, A. (2004b) Editorial: school leadership and school improvement: a simple and complex relationship. *School Leadership & Management* 24, no1. pp3-5
- Harris, A. (2006a) Leading change in schools in difficulty *Journal of Educational Change* 7, pp9-18
- Harris, A. (2006b) Opening the 'Black Box' of Leadership Practice: Taking a Distributed Leadership Perspective. *International Studies in Educational Administration* 34, no2, pp 37-45
- Harris, A. (2007) Distributed Leadership: conceptual confusion and empirical reticence. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*.10, no3, pp315-325
- Harris, A. (2008) Distributed leadership: according to the evidence *Journal of Educational Administration*. 46 no. 2, 2008 pp. 172-188
- Harris, A., Day, C. and Hadfield, M. (2003) Teachers' Perspectives on Effective School Leadership. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice* 9, no1, pp67-77
- Harris, A. and Hopkins, D. (2000) Introduction to Special Feature: alternative perspectives on school improvement. *School Leadership and Management*.20, (1) pp 9-14.
- Harris, A, Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P. and Hopkins D. (2007) Distributed leadership and organizational change: Reviewing the evidence. *Journal of Educational Change*, 8, pp337-347
- Hawley, D.B. (1994) How long do International Heads Survive? A Research Analysis (Part I), *International Schools Journal*, 14, no1, p8-21

Hawley, D.B. (1995) How long do International Heads Survive? A Research Analysis (Part II), *International Schools Journal*, 14, no2, p23-26

Hay, I. (2007) Leadership of Stability and Leadership of volatility: Transactional and Transformational Leaderships Compared. *Empirical Research*. 4, no 4

Haywood. T. (2002) An international dimension to management and leadership skills for international education – in *International Education in practice* (Hayden, Thompson and Walker ed) Kogan Page, London

Hayden, M. (2006) *International Education*. London: Sage Publications

Hayden. M. and Thompson, J. ed (1998) *International Education*, Kogan Page, London

Hayden. M. and Thompson, J. ed (2000) *International Schools and International Education* Kogan Page, London

Hayden. M., Thompson, J. and Walker G. ed (2002) *International Education in Practice* Kogan Page, London

Heystek. J., School Governing Bodies in South Africa. Relationships between Principals and Parent Governors – A Question of Trust. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 34, no 4, pp 473-486

Hill, I. (2006) Student types, school types and their combined influence on the development of intercultural understanding. *Journal of Research in International Education* 5, no4, pp 5-33.

Hill, T. & Lewicki, P. (2007). *STATISTICS Methods and Applications*. StatSoft, Tulsa, OK.

Hodgson, A. (2005) in *Governance in International Schools*, Peridot Press, Suffolk.
Hodgson, A. and Chuck M. eds

Hofman, R. H., Hofman, W.H.A. and Guldemon H. (2002) School governance, culture and student achievement. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*.5, no3, pp 249-272

Hopkins, D. and Reynolds, D (2001) The Past, Present and Future of School Improvement: towards the Third Age. *British Educational Research Journal*, 27, No. 4, pp459-475, no 3, pp 425-446

Hoy, W. K., Tarter, C.J. and Hoy, A. W., (2006) Academic Optimism of Schools: A Force for Student Achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*.

Hui, S.K. and Cheung, H.Y. (2006) A Re-examination of Leadership Style for Hong Kong School-Based Management (SBM) Schools, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 26, No. 2, pp. 173–187

Hurren, B.L. (2006) The effects of principal's humor on teachers' job satisfaction. *Educational Studies* 32, no 4, pp 373-385.

International Baccalaureate (2009a) www.ibo.org

International Baccalaureate (2009b) Diploma curriculum outline.
<http://www.ibo.org/diploma/slideb.cfm>

Jacobson, S. L. and Day, C. (2007) The International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP):An overview of the project, the case studies and their contexts
International Studies in Educational Administration 35, no 3, pp3-10

James, C., Connolly, M., Dunning, G., and Elliot, T. (2007) Systemic Leadership for Schools and the Significance of Systemic Authorisation. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 35, no4, pp 573-588

Kane, M.T. (2001) Current Concerns in Validity Theory. *Journal of Educational Measurement* 38, no. 4, pp. 319-342

Kiel, G.C. and Nicholson, F.J. (2005) Evaluating Boards and Directors. *Corporate Governance* 3, no5, pp 613-631

Kongsved, S.M., Basnov M., Holm-Christensen K. and Hjollund N.H. (2007) Response Rate and Completeness of Questionnaires: A Randomized Study of Internet Versus Paper-and-Pencil Versions, *Journal of Medical Internet Research*;9 no3, e25
URL: <http://www.jmir.org/2007/3/e25/>

Kyriakides, L and Creemers B.P.M. (2008) Using a multidimensional approach to measure the impact of classroom-level factors upon student achievement: a study testing the validity of the dynamic model. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 19, no2, pp183-205

Land, D. (2002) Local School Boards Under Review: Their role and effectiveness in relation to students' academic achievement. 72, no2, pp 229-278

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. (1999) The Relative Effects of Principal and Teacher Sources of Leadership on Student Engagement With School, *Educational Administration Quarterly* 35, pp 679-706

Leigh, A. and Thompson, H. (2004) *How much of the variation in literacy and numeracy can be explained by school performance?* Australian Treasury, Canberra

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. & Masell, B. (1999) Large scale reform: what works? submitted as part of the *External Evaluation of the UK National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*, (Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education).

Lester, S. (1999) *An introduction to phenomenological research*.
<http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf>

Littleford.J (2004) The Risk and Stress of Transition, website articles
<http://www.jlittleford.com/articles.html>

Littleford.J (2005) Littleford and Associates newsletter April 2005

Littleford.J (2005) The Longevity of Heads and the Effectiveness of Schools, website articles
<http://www.jlittleford.com/articles.html>

Littleford.J (2007) The Boards You Should Not Emulate, website articles
<http://www.jlittleford.com/articles.html>

Littleford.J (2008) Developing Healthy Board Governance: What to Do about the Parent Driven Board. website articles
<http://www.jlittleford.com/articles.html>

Littleford.J (2008) Littleford and Associates newsletter Feb 2008

Macbeath, J. (2006) New Relationships for Old; Inspection and self evaluation in England and Hong Kong. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 34, no2, pp2-18

Macbeath, J. (2007) Leadership as a subversive activity. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 45 No. 3, pp. 242-264

MacDonald, J. (2006) The international school industry, *Journal of Research in International Education*, 5, no2, pp191-213

MacDonald, J. (2007) Daring to be different, *Journal of Research in International Education*, 6, no2, pp151-169

Marks, H.M. and Printy, S.M. (2003) Principal Leadership and School Performance: An Integration of Transformational and Instructional Leadership, *Educational Administration Quarterly*. 39, No. 3 pp 370-397

Marzano, R.J. (2007) *The Art and Science of Teaching*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mascall, B, Leithwood K., Straus, T. and Sacks, R. (2008) *Journal of Educational Administration* 46, No. 2, pp. 214-228

Matthews, J. and Sidhu, R. (2005) Desperately seeking the global subject: international education, citizenship and cosmopolitanism. *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 3, no1, pp 49-66

- Matthews, P. and Sammons, P. (2005) Survival of the weakest: the differential improvement of schools causing concern in England. *London Review of Education*. 3, no2, pp159-176
- McCormick, J., Barnett, K., Alavi, S.B. and Newcombe, G. (2006) Board governance of independent schools: A framework for investigation. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 44, no5, pp 429-445.
- McDonald, R. (2002) International school governance: board renewal and the pathway to bold vision – in *International Education in practice* (Hayden, Thompson and Walker ed) Kogan Page, London
- Mertkan-Ozunlu, S. (2007) Reflexive accounts about qualitative interviewing within the context of educational policy in North Cyprus. *Qualitative Research*. 7, no 4, pp 447-459
- Milne, J. (2009) Questionnaires: Advantages and Disadvantages.
http://www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/ltidi/cookbook/info_questionnaires/index.html
- Muijs, D and Harris A. (2003) Teacher Leadership – Improvement through Empowerment. *Educational Management & Administration* 31, no 4, pp 437-448
- Mulford, B., Kendall, D., Ewington, J., Edmunds, B., Kendall, L. and Silins, H. (2008) Successful principalship of high-performance schools in high-poverty communities *Journal of Educational Administration* 46, no 4, pp. 461-480
- Mulford, B., Kendall, D., Ewington, J., Edmunds, B., Kendall, L. and Silins, H. (2009) Successful school principalship in late-career, *Journal of Educational Administration*. 47, no 1, pp 36-49
- Neil, P, Carlisle, K., Knipe, D. and McEwen, A. (2001) Principals in action An analysis of school leadership *Research in Education* 66, pp 40-53
- New York State (2008) website;
<http://www.cs.state.ny.us/successionplanning/workgroups/knowledgemanagement/expertinterviews.cfm>
- Nye, B., Konstantopoulos, S., and Hedges, L. V. (2004) How large are teacher effects? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analyses*. 26, no 3, pp 237-257
- OECD (2001) Knowledge and Skills for Life; First Results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000 *OECD Publications*
- Oughton, T. (2008) Forum, *Independence* 33, no 1, p 65.
- Partington, G. (2001) Qualitative research interviews: Identifying problems in technique. *Issues in Educational Research*, 11, no 2, pp 32-44.

- Pedder, D and Macbeath J. (2008) Organisational learning approaches to school leadership and management teachers' values and perceptions of practice *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 19, no 2, pp 207–224
- Peters, M.A. and McDonough, T. Editorial, *Critical Studies in Education*. 48, no 2, pp 157-163
- Phillips, D.C. and Burbules, N.C.(2000) *Postpositivism and Educational Research*. Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland.
- Presthus, A.M. (2006) A Successful School and its' Principal – Enabling Leadership within the Organization. *International Studies in Educational Administration* 34, no 2, pp 82-99
- Quinn, D. (2002) The impact of principal leadership behaviours on instructional practice and student engagement. *Journal of Educational Administration* 40, no 5, pp 447-467
- Ranson, S. (2004) Configuring School and Community for Learning: the role of governance. *London Review of Education* 2, no 1, pp 3-15.
- Ranson S., Arnott M., McKeown P., Martin J. and Smith P. (2005) The participation of volunteer citizens in school governance. *Educational Review*, 57, no 3, pp 357-371.
- Renihan, F.I. (2003) Review of 'School Improvement for Real.' Auth Hopkins D. London and New York: Routledge Falmer. In *Journal of Educational Change*, 4, no 3, pp 195-208
- Reynolds, D. (2006) World Class Schools: Some methodological and substantive findings and implications of the International School Effectiveness Research Project (ISERP). *Educational Research and Evaluation*. 12, no 6, pp 535-560
- Riley, K., Heneveld, W. and Harris, A. (2002) Big Change Questions, Are School Effectiveness Measures Suspect in Helping Us Identify What is Needed to Transform Teaching and Learning? *Journal of Educational Change*, 3, no 4, pp 407-415
- Robbins, D. (2006) *Bourdieu, education and society* Oxford Bardwell Press
- Robinson, V. (2008) Forging the links between distributed leadership and educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration* 45, no2, pp 241-256
- Roulston, K., deMarrais, K. and Lewis, J.B. (2003) Learning to Interview in the Social Sciences. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9, no 4, pp 643-668
- Rowan, B., *Educational Researcher*. April, pp 24-31
- Ruddin, L.P. (2006) You Can Generalize Stupid! Social Scientists, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Case Study Methodology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12, no 4, pp 797-812

Rutherford, D. (2004) The Impact of Leadership in Primary Schools, *Management in Education* 18; no 5, pp 21-26

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimer, P. and Ouston, J. (1979) *Fifteen thousand hours*. Cambridge, Mass Harvard University Press

Sampson, H. (2004) Navigating the waves: the usefulness of a pilot in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 4, no 3, pp 383-402

Shaw, I. (2003) Qualitative research and outcomes in health, social work and education. *Qualitative Research*, 3, no 1, pp 57-77

Silins, H. and Mulford, B. (2008) Schools as learning organisations; The case for system, teacher and student learning. *Journal of Educational Administration* 40, no 5, pp 425-426.

Silverman, D. (2005) *Doing Qualitative Research*, SAGE London

Simandiraki, A. (2006) International education and cultural heritage; Alliance or antagonism? *Journal of Research in International Education* 5, no1, pp 35-56

Smith, P. and Hoy, W. (2007) Academic optimism and student achievement in urban elementary schools. *Journal of Educational Administration* 45, no 5, pp 556-568

Spillane J. P., Halverson, R. and Diamond, J. B. (2001) Investigating School Leadership Practice: A Distributed Perspective. *Educational Researcher* April, pp 23-28.

Stake, R.E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*. Sage, London

Stout, W. (2005) in *Governance in International Schools*, Peridot Press, Suffolk.
Hodgson, A. and Chuck M. eds

Stroud, V. (2006) Sustaining Skills in Headship, Professional Development for Experienced Headteachers. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 34, no 1, pp 89-103

Swaffield, S. (2004) Critical friends: supporting leadership, improving learning. *Improving Schools*, 7, pp 267-278

Sylvester, R. (2002) Mapping International Education: A Historical Survey 1893-1944. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 1, pp 90-125

Sylvester, R. (2003) Further mapping of the territory of international education in the 20th century (1944-1969) *Journal of Research in International Education*, 2, no 2, pp 185-204

Sylvester, R. (2005) Framing the map of international education (1969-1998), *Journal of Research in International Education*, 4, pp 123-151

Tangye, R. (2005) in *Governance in International Schools*, Peridot Press, Suffolk.
Hodgson, A. and Chuck M. eds

Teddlie, C., Kirby, P.C., and Stringfield. S. (1989) Effective versus Ineffective Schools: Observable Differences in the Classroom. *American Journal of Education*, 97. May, pp 221-236

Tellis, W. (1997a) Introduction to Case Study. *The Qualitative Report*.3, no 2.

Tellis, W. (1997b) Application of a Case Study Methodology. *The Qualitative Report*.3, no 3.

Teese, R. and Polesel, J. (2003) *Undemocratic Schooling*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria.

Torrance, H. (2008) Building Confidence in Qualitative Research, Engaging the Demands of Policy. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, no 4, pp 507-527

Tschannen-Moran, M. , Hoy, A. W., and Hoy, W.K. (1998) Teacher Efficacy: Its Meaning and Measure, *Review of Educational Research*, 68, no 2, pp 202-248

University of Bolton (2009)

http://data.bolton.ac.uk/bissto/researchskills/research_method/data_collection/triangulation.htm

Van den Berghe L. A.A. and Levrau A. (2004) Evaluating Boards of Directors: what constitutes a good corporate board? *Corporate Governance* 12, no 4, pp 461-478

Vinge, D. (2005) in *Governance in International Schools*, Peridot Press, Suffolk.
Hodgson, A. and Chuck M. eds

Walker, A. and Dimmock, C. (2004) The International Role of the NCSL. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership* 32, no 3, pp 269-287

Walonick, D. (1993) Everything you wanted to know about questionnaires but were afraid to ask. <http://www.statpac.com/research-papers/questionnaires.htm>

Watkins, C. (2005) Classrooms as learning communities: review of research. *London Review of Education* 3, no 1, pp 47-64.

Web Centre for Social Research Methods. (2009)

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/>

Wilkinson, D. (2002) International education and issues of governance – in *International Education in practice* (Hayden, Thompson and Walker ed) Kogan Page, London

Willms, J. D. (2003) Ten Hypotheses about Socioeconomic Gradients and Community Differences in Children's Developmental Outcomes. *Human Resources Development Canada Publications Centre, Quebec*

Willms, J.D. (2004) Reading Achievement in Canada and the United States: Findings from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment. *Learning Policy Directorate Strategic Policy and Planning; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada Publications.*

Witziers, B., Bosker, R. J. and Kruger, M. L. (2003) Educational Leadership and Student Achievement: The Elusive Search for an Association, *Educational Administration Quarterly* 39, no.3, pp 398-425

Wrigley, T. (2004) 'School effectiveness': the problem of reductionism. *British Educational Research Journal*, 30, no 2, pp 227-244

Yin, R.K. (1994) *Case Study Research* Sage, London

Yin, R.K. (2003) *Applications of Case Study Research* Sage, London

Youngs, P and King, M.B.(2002) Principal Leadership for Professional Development to Build School Capacity *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38, no 5, pp 643-670

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Interview schedule – school studies

Appendix 3: Interview schedule – expert interviews